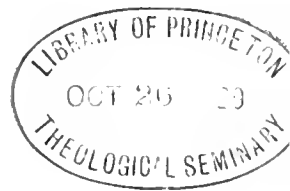


BV 4811 .B664 1838
Bible.
The Book of Psalms

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THE
BOOK OF PSALMS.



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THE

ARRANGED FOR

FAMILY DEVOTION;

WITH

I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also
1 Cor. xiv. 15.

JOHN HATCHARD & SON, PICCADILLY:
FRASER & CRAWFORD, EDINBURGH: AND
W. CURRY, JUN. & CO. DUBLIN.

EDINBURGH :
Printed by ANDREW SHORTREDE, Thistle Lane.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS volume may prove acceptable to those heads of families who are in the habit of assembling their households every morning for the purposes of instruction and devotion. The Psalms have been so arranged as to be read through once in four months, or three times in the course of the year. A short Admonition is prefixed, and a Prayer subjoined to each Psalm, which, taken together, will (with the addition of the Lord's Prayer) be found to occupy the period of time which is usually allotted to family prayers. Notes have been added, which may be studied in private, and over which the eye may glance at the time of reading the Psalm.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The version used is mainly that of the Book of Common Prayer, but, in some instances, the Bible version has been substituted.

The 53d, 70th, and 108th Psalms have been omitted, as their contents are found in other Psalms.

The notes are mostly taken from the Commentaries of Bishops Horne and Horsley.

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CHRONOLOGY OF THE PSALMS.

The 1st and 119th Psalms are supposed to have been written by Ezra about 444 years before Christ.

The 68th and 39th Psalms are supposed to have been written by Moses about 1500 years before Christ.

The Psalms marked * were written during the life of David, from 1063 to 1015 years before Christ.

The Psalms marked † are supposed to have been written either during or subsequent to the Babylonish captivity, from 539 to 515 years before Christ.

The remainder of the Psalms are supposed to have been written at different periods, between 1004 to 583 years before Christ.

See TOWNSEND'S Bible.

EXTRACTS.

“The Psalms are an epitome of the Bible, adapted to the purposes of devotion. That which we read in the other Scriptures, is reduced to practice when we recite it in the Psalms ; in those, repentance and faith are described, but in these they are acted ; by a perusal of the former, we learn how others served God, but by using the latter, we serve him ourselves.

“What is there necessary for man to know, says the pious and judicious Hooker, which the Psalms are not able to teach ? They are to beginners an easy and familiar introduction ; a mighty augmentation of all virtue and knowledge, in such as are entered before ; a strong confirmation to the most perfect among others. Heroical magnanimity, exquisite justice, grave moderation, exact wisdom, repentance unfeigned, unwearied patience, the mysteries of God, the sufferings of Christ, the terrors of wrath, the comforts of grace, the works of Providence over this world, and the promised joys of that world which is to come ; all good necessary to be either known, or done, or had, this one celestial fountain yieldeth. Let there be any grief or disease incident unto the soul of man, any wound or sickness named, for which there is not in this treasure house a present comfortable remedy at all times to be found.

“In the language of this Divine book, therefore, the prayers and praises of the Church have been offered up to the Throne of Grace, from age to age. And it appears to have been the Manual of the Son of God, in the days of his flesh, who, at the conclusion of his last supper, is generally supposed, and that upon good grounds, to have sung a hymn taken from it—who pronounced on the Cross, the beginning of the 22d Psalm, ‘My God ! my God ! why hast thou forsaken me ?’—and expired with a part of the 31st Psalm in his mouth, ‘Into thy hands I commend my spirit.’ Thus, he who had not the Spirit by measure, in whom were hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and who spake as never man spake, yet chose to conclude his life, to solace himself in his greatest agony, and at last to breathe out his soul in the Psalmist’s form of words rather than his own. No tongue of men or angel, as Dr Hammond justly observes, can convey a higher idea of any book, and of their felicity who use it aright.”—*Bishop Horne’s Preface to his Commentary on the Psalms.*

“It cannot be doubted that the Psalms in general are devotional and experimental, the language of the pious heart under its various exercises ; whether mourning for sin, thirsting after God, or rejoicing in him ; whether burdened with affliction, struggling with temptation, or triumphing in the hope or enjoyment of deliverance ; whether admiring the divine

EXTRACTS.

perfections, thanking God for his mercies, meditating on his truths, or delighting in his service. They are, in a great measure, a divinely appointed standard of genuine experience, by which we may judge whether, or how far our own desires, aims, fears, hopes, joys and sorrows, are spiritual; and how far they are carnal, or verge to enthusiasm or delusion. The value of the Psalms in this particular is inestimable; and the more cordially we can enter into the views and appropriate language of the Psalmist, the higher is our progress in genuine religion."—*Scott's Preface to the Psalms.*

"The Psalms appear to be compositions of various authors in various ages; some much more ancient than the times of King David, some of a much later age. Of many, David himself was undoubtedly the author; and that those of his composition were prophetic, we have David's own authority; for thus, at the close of his life, he describes himself and his sacred songs,—‘David, the son of Jesse, said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet Psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.’ It was the word, therefore, of Jehovah's Spirit that was uttered by David's tongue.

"The Psalms are all poems of the lyric kind—that is, adapted to music; but with great variety in the style of composition: some are Odes, or narratives of the facts either of public or private history, or private life, in a highly adorned and figured style: some are Elegiac, or pathetic compositions upon mournful subjects: some are Ethic, delivering grave maxims of life, or the precepts of religion, in solemn, but, for the most part, simple strains: some are Enigmatic; but a very great part are a sort of Dramatic Ode, consisting of dialogues. In these Dialogue Psalms, the persons are frequently the Psalmist himself, or the chorus of Priests and Levites, or the leader of the Levitical band. The other persons are Jehovah, sometimes as one, sometimes as another of the three persons: Christ in his incarnate state; sometimes before, sometimes after his resurrection, sometimes as a priest, as a king, or as a conqueror. The part of Jehovah is sometimes, indeed, supplied by an oracular voice, breaking out from the sanctuary."* —*Bishop Horsley's Preface.*

* Examples are given in the 24th and 67th Psalms, as translated by Bishop Horsley

THE
BOOK OF PSALMS.

JANUARY.	}	First Day.
MAY.		
SEPTEMBER.		PSALM I.

Admonition

So great and so numerous are our spiritual adversaries, that no precautions of our own, unassisted by divine grace, are sufficient to guard us against their assaults; but this Psalm sets out with an assurance, that God's blessing will attend the steps which a wise person takes to avoid temptation. Amongst the precautions which do lie within our power, is that of avoiding evil company, which, by effacing all good impressions from the mind, leads to hardness of heart, to misery in this world, and to everlasting punishment in the next. He who now shudders at the thought of persisting in sin, and thus bringing down upon himself the eternal

wrath of the Almighty, ought not to have any fellowship with bad men, since it is impossible for any one who forsakes the right path to say whither, or how far, he shall wander from it. Those persons who, through God's grace, have attained a firm conviction that no happiness they can enjoy in the present life is to be compared with a state of never ending bliss in the world to come, will take delight in those Scriptures which assure them of salvation; they will meditate on them day and night, and will look to them for guidance when in prosperity, and for comfort when in adversity. By such meditation, a person as naturally improves and advances in holy dispositions, as a tree thrives and flourishes in a kindly and well-watered soil; and whilst ungodly or irreligious persons are drifted to and fro by various lusts and passions, the man who is influenced by principles of religion is enabled to maintain consistency of conduct and stability of character.

1. Blessed is the man that hath not walked in the counsel¹ of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, and hath not sat in the seat of the scornful;²

2. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law will he exercise himself³ day and night.

3. And he shall be like a tree planted by the water side, that will bring forth his fruit in due season.

⁽¹⁾ After the counsel.

⁽³⁾ Will he meditate.

⁽²⁾ Of those who scoff at religion.

4. His leaf, also, shall not wither ; and, look, whatsoever he doeth, it shall prosper.

5. As for the ungodly, it is not so with them; but they are like the chaff, which the wind scattereth away from the face of the earth.

6. Therefore, the ungodly shall not be able to stand in the judgment,⁴ neither the sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

7. But the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous,⁵ and the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to
the Holy Ghost,

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever
shall be, world without end. Amen.

O Holy Lord God, fountain of all blessing, be pleased to sow the good seed of thy Word in our hearts, and water it with the dew of thy Spirit; that while we meditate on it day and night, we may be like a tree planted by the water side, bringing forth at all times, and in all seasons, the fruits of a holy conversation. Suffer us not to walk in the way of sinners, nor to have fellowship with those who make a mock at sin, lest we be partakers in their calamity; but guide us, we most humbly beseech thee, in the strait and narrow way that leadeth to life

⁽⁴⁾ In the judgment of the last day. having this seal, the Lord knoweth them

(5) The foundation of God standeth sure, that are his,—2 Tim. ii. 19.

eternal, that in the last great day we may be able to stand in the judgment, and may be found amongst those who, through thy mercy and the merits of our Redeemer, shall inherit the promises of the Gospel. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Advocate. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

JANUARY.

MAY.

SEPTEMBER.



SECOND DAY.

PSALM II.

ADMONITION

At the beginning and ending of this Psalm, the Psalmist speaks prophetically in his own person, whilst in the 7th, 8th, and 9th verses he speaks in the person of the Messiah. If we turn to the 4th of Acts, the 25th to the 28th verses, we shall see that the beginning of this Psalm was intended to foreshew the opposition that would be made to Christ, as also the vain attempts of the Jewish rulers, and of heathen kings and potentates, to suppress or prevent the extension of Christianity. The impotence of such attempts is compared to the brittleness of a potter's vessel, whilst the power of the Almighty to punish or to crush them is described under the figure of a rod of iron. The same figures are used in the 2d of Revelations at the

27th verse, in connection with the triumphant issue of a steady faith in Christ. This steady faith, productive of good works, may be said to be the yoke and burden of Christ; it imposes upon us, no doubt, the restraint of our passions, to which rebellious human nature, unassisted by divine grace, is ever unwilling to submit. But let us not impiously cast away those cords which attach us to Christ, nor break asunder those bonds which connect us with the hope of salvation through his sufferings, and through his merits, lest He that dwelleth in heaven should laugh us to scorn and have us in derision. But let us serve the Lord in fear, with a diffidence of our own strength and power, and rejoice in our title of Christians with a reverential love of our Saviour, since a day is at hand, when nought will remain of the wisdom, and learning, and power of this world, save that which is founded on faith, and love, and obedience to God's commandments.

1. ¹Why do the heathen so furiously rage together, and why do the people imagine a vain thing?

2. The kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his Anointed.

3. ²Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

⁽¹⁾ The Psalmist speaks in his own person. — spoken by the powers in arms against Messiah.

⁽²⁾ These words are supposed to be

4. He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn, the Lord shall have them in derision.

5. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

6. Yet³ have I set my King upon my holy hill of Sion.

7. ⁴I will declare the decree,—the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

8. Desire of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession.

9. Thou shalt bruise them with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

10. ⁵Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be learned, ye that are judges of the earth.

11. Serve the Lord in fear, and rejoice unto him with reverence.

12. Kiss the Son,⁶ lest he be angry, and so ye perish from the right way; if his wrath be kindled, yea, but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

O blessed Jesus, into whose hands are committed all dominion and power in the kingdoms and empires of the world, on whose vesture and

(3) "Yet," means, notwithstanding all opposition. he was declared to be the Son of God with power.

(4) Messiah speaks.—We learn from Acts xiii. 33, that this refers to the day when Christ rose from the dead, when, (5) The Psalmist again speaks in his own person.

as St Paul expresses it in Romans, i. 4, (6) Kiss the Son in token of homage and service.

on whose thigh a name is written, King of kings, and Lord of lords, we adore thee in thine infinite excellency, and most glorious majesty, beseeching thee to reveal thy name and the glory of thy kingdom to the heathen, which know thee not, and to the uttermost parts of the earth, which are given thee for thy possession and inheritance. And grant to us, thy servants, who have been blessed with the light of thy holy Gospel, that we may walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we have been called, shewing forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives. Give unto us, we beseech thee, the increase of faith, hope, and charity; and, that we may obtain that which thou dost promise, make us to love that which thou dost command. Hear us, O merciful Saviour, who, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. Amen.

JANUARY.

MAY.

SEPTEMBER.

} PSALMS III. & IV.

The third Psalm was composed by David, during the rebellion of his son Absalom, which caused him great affliction as a father, and great

political difficulty as a monarch ; it shews the trust and confidence in Almighty God, which were always uppermost in David's mind, and thus holds out a lesson to us, which we may apply, not only in our temporal difficulties, but also as an incitement to prayer for God's gracious assistance when temptations assail our spiritual welfare. Our foes, like David's, may be "those of our own households ;" our dearest relatives, instead of walking with us in the ways of God, may vex and oppose us ; in such cases, let us, in meekness and the spirit of charity, refer the matter in prayer to God : thus, in the most stormy night of trouble shall we be enabled to take our rest, in confidence that the Lord will sustain us, and that his blessing will be upon his people.

In the fourth Psalm, we find David addressing, first, his righteous God in terms of thanksgiving and prayer ; and, secondly, his rebellious subjects, in terms of rebuke and warning, entreating them to commune with their own hearts, to offer the sacrifice of righteousness, and to put their trust in the Lord. In every circumstance of human life, this self-communion is an exercise of the most salutary nature ; it tends to restrain us from vice, to cherish the seeds of virtue, to lead us to consider how far the tenor of our lives is in conformity with God's law, to make us "stand in awe and sin not." Happy, thrice happy that Christian who lays himself

down to rest full of the joys of a good conscience and of faith unfeigned, and is thus prepared to resign himself to his Maker's care, whether in life or in death, whether in the expectation of arising from his bed on the following morning, or from his grave in the still more glorious morning of the last day.

PSALM III.

1. Lord, how are they increased that trouble me ; many are they that rise against me.

2. Many one there be that say of my soul, There is no help for him in his God.

3. But thou, O Lord, art my defender, thou art my worship, and the lifter up of my head.¹

4. I did call upon the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill.

5. I laid me down and slept, and rose up again, for the Lord sustained me.

6. I will not be afraid for ten thousands of the people that have set themselves against me round about.

7. Up, Lord, and help me, O my God ; for thou smitest all mine enemies upon the cheek bone, thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.²

8. Salvation belongeth unto the Lord, and thy blessing is upon thy people.³

⁽¹⁾ Thou makest me to be honoured and respected.

⁽²⁾ This comparison is drawn from fierce animals, whose power of injury is in their jaws and teeth.

⁽³⁾ Observe, that petitions for help are intermixed with expressions of perfect reliance on God's protection.

PSALM IV.

1. Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness:¹ thou hast set me at liberty when I was in trouble; have mercy upon me, and hearken unto my prayer.

2. O ye sons of men! how long will ye blaspheme mine honour,² and have such pleasure in vanity, and seek after leasing.

3. But know, that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear when I call unto him.

4. Stand in awe, and sin not; commune with your own heart, and in your chamber, and be still.

5. Offer the sacrifice of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.

6. There be many that say, Who will shew us any good?

7. Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.

8. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine increase.³

9. I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest; for it is thou, Lord, only that makest me dwell in safety.

O God, who art the author of all righteousness, from whom all grace, and safety, and glory do proceed, mercifully look upon our infirmities,

⁽¹⁾ O God, the defender of my righteous cause.

⁽²⁾ Will ye speak evil of that which is my honour and glory?—"Leasing" means falsehood.

⁽³⁾ The meaning is, "Thou hast put more gladness into my heart than arose in theirs upon the increase of worldly prosperity."

and for the glory of thy name, turn from us all those evils that we most righteously have deserved, and grant that in all our troubles we may put our whole trust and confidence in thy mercy, and evermore serve thee in holiness and pureness of living to thy honour and glory. Grant that we may not place our desires and hopes upon the perishing and unsatisfying things of this world, but upon those everlasting joys which are at thy right hand for evermore. Make us to have a lively sense of the blessings of a pure conscience, so that when we nightly lay us down to take our rest, we may commit ourselves into thy hands with a perfect, though humble, trust and assurance of thy gracious protection of us in this life, and of thy mercy towards us in the life to come, through Jesus Christ, our only Lord and Saviour. Amen.

JANUARY. }

MAY. }

SEPTEMBER. }

PSALM V.

This Psalm was written at a time when David was persecuted by his political enemies. It must always be recollected, that it was God who appointed David to be king over Israel, and that those who opposed David, did, in fact,

oppose themselves to the divine will. David's enemies, therefore, were God's enemies, and as such, he prophesies their failure and their punishment. We are not to understand David as praying for their punishment, but as declaring it *prophetically*. We should, therefore, consider the 11th verse as if written thus, "Thou *wilt* cast them out;" "Thou *wilt* destroy them, O God;" "Thou *wilt* let them fall." The depravity of mankind, Jews as well as Gentiles, is strongly pictured in the 9th and 10th verses. St Paul quotes these words in his epistle to the Romans, when describing the natural depravity of the heart of man, previous to the Gospel dispensation. Under this dispensation, we are assured of the grace of God to enable us to subdue this depravity, and to become new creatures in Christ, if we earnestly pray for divine help. Let us direct our attention to the beginning and ending of this Psalm; and pray with sincerity and fervour, in the humble hope that our prayers will ascend to the throne of grace, as an acceptable service to the Author of all good.

1. Ponder my words, O Lord; consider my meditation.

2. O hearken thou unto the voice of my calling, my King and my God; for unto thee will I make my prayer.

3. My voice shalt thou hear betimes, O Lord; early in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.

4. For thou art the God that hast no pleasure in wickedness ; neither shall any evil¹ dwell with thee.

5. Such as be foolish shall not stand in thy sight ; for thou hatest all them that work vanity.²

6. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing ;³ the Lord will abhor both the blood-thirsty and deceitful man.

7. But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy ; and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.

8. Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness, because of mine enemies ; make thy way plain before my face.

9. and 10. For there is no faithfulness in their mouth : their inward parts are very wickedness : their throat is an open sepulchre ; they flatter with their tongue.

11. Destroy thou them, O God ; let them perish through their own imaginations ; cast them out in the multitude of their ungodliness, for they have rebelled against thee.

12. And let all them that put their trust in thee rejoice : they shall ever be giving of thanks, because thou defendest them : they that love thy name shall be joyful in thee.

13. For thou, Lord, wilt give thy blessing unto the righteous ; and with thy favourable kindness wilt thou defend him, as with a shield.

⁽¹⁾ Any evil person.

⁽³⁾ Leasing or falsehood.

⁽²⁾ Vanity or wickedness.

Let us pray.

O most holy Lord God, who canst take no pleasure in wickedness, neither sufferest evil to enter into thy presence ; thou art always more ready to hear, than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire or deserve. Keep us, we beseech thee, under the protection of thy good providence, and make us to have such a perpetual fear and love of thy holy name as may defend us from the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Make us thankful for thy great mercy towards us in Christ Jesus, and for the blessing we enjoy in the possession of thy holy word : sanctify to us this treasure, and grant that we may hear, read, mark, learn, and so inwardly digest it, that we may bring forth the fruits of righteousness, and have such comfortable assurance of our heavenly calling, that when it shall please thee to take us hence, we may be enabled to look forward without dismay to that great account we must one day render ; and may finally be made partakers of everlasting glory in the life to come. Through the merits and for the sake of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

JANUARY.

MAY.

SEPTEMBER.

}
}
}

First Day

PSALM VI.

This Psalm, though it stands among the first in the book, was written towards the close of David's life, at a period of bodily sickness, augmented by the malicious joy which it afforded to his enemies. David's sickness of body appears to have been accompanied by sincere contrition of soul, for the sins he had committed, and herein this Psalm becomes instructive to every Christian. It is good for us all to be in trouble, that we may call our own ways to remembrance. Let us not, then, be weary of the chastisements of the Lord, when he is pleased to send them upon us ; let us only pray that they be not sent upon us in displeasure. Let us be assured, that continual prosperity is not good for any man ; that as God's children, we need reproof and correction ; and if we take them patiently, if they bring forth contrition and repentance, then will faith speak comfortable words to our souls, will point to the cross of Christ, and, assuring us of the pardon of our sins, will elevate us in heart and mind, to those realms of everlasting light, where sin, where sickness, and where sorrow shall be no more.

1. O Lord, rebuke me not in thine indignation, neither chasten me in thy displeasure.¹

2. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak. O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed.

3. My soul also is sore troubled ; but, Lord, how long wilt thou punish me ?

4. Turn thee, O Lord, and deliver my soul ; O save me for thy mercies' sake.

5. For in death no man remembereth thee, and who will give thee thanks in the pit.

6. I am weary of my groaning, every night wash I my bed, and water my couch with my tears.²

7. My beauty is gone for very trouble, and worn away because of all mine enemies.

8. Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity, for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.

9. The Lord hath heard my petition ; the Lord will receive my prayer.

10. All mine enemies shall be confounded and sore vexed : they shall be turned back and put to shame suddenly.



O most merciful God, who chastenest us when we need correction, but whose property is always to have mercy and to forgive, behold with the eyes of thy pity and compassion, the

(¹) Ungodly men of every description to mourn for sin with brokenness of heart, have always more noticed David's sins, distinguish the believer from all other than his mourning for them. Great tenderness of conscience, and a disposition men.

(²) Tears of repentance.

state of thine humble servants ; when brought low by sickness of body, they are also made most miserable by reason of sin. Hear the voice of our weeping, pity our groaning ; strengthen us, for we are weak, and deliver our souls ; that being saved from the bottomless pit, we may evermore give thanks unto thy holy name. O turn from the severity of thy displeasure, and visit us at such seasons with an assurance of thy mercy and salvation. Give us great sorrow and contrition for all our sins, and in all our adversities let thy comfort sustain us ; and this we humbly beg for the sake and through the merits of him upon whom has been laid the burden of our sins, whose soul was thereby rendered exceeding sorrowful even unto death, Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

JANUARY. }
MAY. } PSALM VII.
SEPTEMBER. }

It is difficult to ascertain any particular occasion of this Psalm in the life of David. The real subject seems to be the Messiah's appeal to God against the false accusations of his enemies. The predictions which it contains

of the final conversion of the whole world, and of the future judgment, are clear and explicit. We are here taught that the wickedness of the ungodly shall come to an end; that although God bears with them for a time, yet if they go on in their wickedness, he prepares for them the punishments they deserve, and often makes them the instruments of their own ruin. The Psalm may be divided into parts, wherein different subjects are taken up in different styles of composition.

PART FIRST.

1. O Lord my God, in thee have I put my trust :
Save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me ;

2. Lest he devour my soul like a lion, and tear it in pieces, while there is none to help.

3. O Lord my God, if I have done any such thing ; or if there be any wickedness in my hands ;

4. If I have rewarded evil unto him that dealt friendly with me ; (yea, I have delivered him that without any cause is mine enemy ;)

5. Then let mine enemy persecute my soul, and take me ; yea let him tread my life down upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust.

PART SECOND.

6. Stand up, O Lord, in thy wrath, and lift up thyself, because of the indignation of mine enemies ; arise up for me in the judgment that thou hast commanded.

7. And so shall the congregation of the people come about thee ; for their sakes, therefore, lift up thyself again.

8. The Lord shall judge the people : give sentence with me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to the innocency that is in me.¹

9. O let the wickedness of the ungodly come to an end ; but guide thou the just.

10. For the righteous God trieth the very hearts and reins.²

PART THIRD.

11. My help cometh of God, who preserveth them that are true of heart.

12. God is a righteous judge, strong and patient ; and God is provoked every day.

13. 14. If a man will not turn, he will whet his sword ; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath prepared for him the instruments of death ; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.

15. Behold he [the ungodly man] travaileth with mischief ; he hath conceived sorrow, and brought forth ungodliness.

16. He hath graven and digged up a pit, and is fallen himself into the destruction that he made for other.

17. For his travail shall come upon his own head, and his wickedness shall fall on his own pate.

18. I will give thanks unto the Lord according to his righteousness ; and I will praise the name of the Lord most High.

⁽¹⁾ We can only pronounce these words, with reference to Christ's righteousness. ⁽²⁾ The most secret desires and thoughts.

O God, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright, grant to us such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty and everlasting God, who, of thy tender love towards mankind, has sent thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility ; mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

JANUARY.	}	PSALM VIII.
MAY.		
SEPTEMBER.		

This Psalm was meant as an act of praise to God, for his great goodness to man in the works both of creation and redemption. Its

direct reference to the Messiah is proved by the words of our Saviour to the chief priests and scribes, in the temple: "Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, thou hast perfected praise?" And again, in the 2d chapter of the Hebrews, where the 4th, 5th, and 6th verses of this Psalm are quoted. When composing it, David must have had in view the starry heavens. He is struck with the awful magnificence of the firmament, and then, turning his thoughts to man in his fallen nature, he exclaims, "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?" that thou shouldst send thine Anointed to take our nature, and to bring salvation to us, thereby exalting us once more to the dignity of being thy children, and holding out to us the prospect of still farther exaltation to thy kingdom in heaven.

Whether, then, we consider the dominion that is given us over the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, or the fishes of the sea, for our temporal sustenance; or whether we consider the fellowship hereafter with angels, and with God himself, to which we are mercifully called through Jesus Christ, let us join heart and mind in exclaiming, "O Lord, our Governor! how excellent is thy name in all the world!"

1. O Lord our Governor, how excellent is thy name in all the world : thou, that hast set thy glory above the heavens !

2. Out of the mouth of very babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.¹

3. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained :

4. What is man that thou art mindful of him ; and the Son of man that thou visitest him ?

5. Thou madest him lower than the angels, to crown him with glory and worship.²

6. Thou makest him to have dominion of the works of thy hands ; and thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.³

7. and 8. All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field ; the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea ; and whatsoever walketh through the paths of the seas.

9. O Lord our Governor, how excellent is thy name in all the world !

O Lord God, Father of men and angels, Creator of the world, who hast made all things in a wonderful order, and hast appointed them all to minister for good to mankind ; give us

(1) The praises of Messiah, celebrated in the Church by his children, have in them a strength and power which nothing can withstand.

(2) This relates to Christ.

(3) It is here signified, that what the first Adam lost by transgression, the second Adam regained by obedience.

great and awful apprehensions of thy glory and immensity, thy majesty and mercy, that we may adore thee as our Creator, love thee as our Redeemer, and obey thee as our Governor. And since thou hast shewed thy mercy in visiting and redeeming us, grant that we may never be unmindful of this thine inestimable love, nor cease to praise thee for the means of grace and hopes of glory thus vouchsafed to us. Suffer us not, we beseech thee, to abuse thy creatures, over whom thou hast given us power ; but give us grace to use them with such temperance, that thy name may be still more magnified, and thy providence more declared. Make us, we beseech thee, to have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy name ; and grant that we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

JANUARY.

MAY.

SEPTEMBER.

}

PSALM IX.

We know from history the ascendancy which has been gained by idolatrous nations,—by the Assyrian, the Babylonian, and the Roman empires ; but where now is Nineveh or Babylon,

or where the glories of ancient Rome? The memorial of the two first has been utterly sunk, and but little remains of the latter; and that little serving as a contrast between her ancient and her modern state. We know that the powers of darkness are permitted to have their hour: then it is that men are tried—that faith is tried—that confidence in Almighty God is put to the proof. We know that the voices of them who cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him,” prevailed; we know that the Christian Church has in various ages endured the severest persecution; and do we not know, by the signs of the times, and the extent of vice which we behold, that Satan still goeth to and fro upon the earth? But the Lord has never failed, and will never fail those that seek him: the gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church: the patient abiding of the meek shall not be disappointed of its hope: and although vice and infidelity should for a time appear triumphant, yet ultimately the ungodly will be trapped in the work of his own hands; and the wicked, and those that forget God, shall be turned into the pit of everlasting destruction.

1. I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, with my whole heart: I will speak of all thy marvellous works.¹

2. I will be glad and rejoice in thee; yea, my songs will I make of thy Name, O thou most Highest.

(1) The Psalmist speaks in the person of the Christian Church.

3. While mine enemies are driven back, they shall fall, and perish at thy presence.

4. For thou hast maintained my right and my cause : thou art set in the throne that judgest right.

5. Thou hast rebuked the heathen, and destroyed the ungodly : thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.

6. O thou enemy, destructions² are come to a perpetual end ; even as the cities which thou hast destroyed, their memorial is perished with them.

7. But the Lord shall endure for ever : he hath also prepared his seat for judgment.

8. For he shall judge the world in righteousness, and minister true judgment unto the people.

9. The Lord also will be a defence for the oppressed, even a refuge in due time of trouble.

10. And they that know thy name³ will put their trust in thee ; for thou, Lord, hast never failed them that seek thee.

11. O praise the Lord which dwelleth in Sion : shew the people of his doings.

12. For when he maketh inquisition for blood,⁴ he remembereth them, and forgetteth not the complaint of the poor.⁵

13. ⁶Have mercy upon me, O Lord ; consider the trouble which I suffer of them that hate me, thou that liftest me up from the gates of death,

14. ⁷That I may shew all thy praises within the

(²) Or desolations have consumed the enemy for ever.

(³) The poor or humble in spirit.

(³) To know God's name, is to know his mercy, wisdom, and power.

(⁶) The Church here speaks as militant on earth.

(⁴) When he taketh account of the blood of his servants.

(⁷) The first part of this verse seems connected with the preceding verse.

ports of the daughter of Sion ; I will rejoice in thy salvation.

15. The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made : in the same net which they hid privily is their foot taken.⁸

16. The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth : the ungodly is trapped in the work of his own hands.

17. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God.

18. For the poor shall not always be forgotten ; the patient abiding of the meek shall not perish for ever.

19. Up, Lord, and let not man have the upper hand ; let the heathen be judged in thy sight.

20. Put them in fear, O Lord, that the heathen may know themselves to be but men.⁹

Almighty and everlasting God, who hast revealed thy glory to mankind through our Lord Jesus Christ, keep, we beseech thee, thy household the Church in continual godliness ; and grant that all they that do confess thy holy name, may agree in the truth of thy holy word, and live in unity and godly love. Give grace, O heavenly Father, to all bishops and curates, that they may, both by their life and doctrine, set forth thy true and lively word, and rightly

⁽⁸⁾ Faith beholds as if already executed, the righteous judgment of God.

⁽⁹⁾ But weak and helpless mortals.

and duly administer thy holy sacraments ; and to all thy people give thy heavenly grace, and especially to us thy servants here assembled, that, with meek heart and due reverence, we may hear and receive thy holy word, truly serving thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. Lord, we beseech thee, let thy Spirit confirm all them that are strong in the faith, and comfort, and succour, and strengthen all them that are weak-hearted. Beat down Satan under our feet, and let not sin have dominion over us, that we may rejoice in thy salvation, and be made heirs of thy everlasting kingdom, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

JANUARY.

MAY.

SEPTEMBER.

}

PSALM X.

This psalm is supposed to have been indited during the captivity in Babylon, whilst the people of God were suffering cruel persecution from an atheistical foe, in whom we see the workings of a haughty spirit, of a reprobate mind, of an impure heart, seeking confidently its own ends, regardless of God's judgments, and using both force and deceit as means of

oppression. Let us take warning by this view of the depravity of man's unregenerated nature, that we may apply with fervour for the assistance of God's Holy Spirit to enable us to subdue it, and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Though it might seem at times as if the Lord stood afar off in seasons of affliction, yet faith assures us that in reality he is ever nigh unto them that are of an humble spirit ; that he hears their prayers, and will, in his own good time, deliver them from all their troubles. The Lord is King for ever and ever.

1. Why standest thou afar off, O Lord ; why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble ?

2. The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor :¹ let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.

3. For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth.

4. The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God : God is not in all his thoughts.

5. His ways are always grievous ; thy judgments are far above out of his sight : as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them.

6. He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved ; for I shall never be in adversity.

7. His mouth is full of cursing, and deceit, and fraud : under his tongue is mischief and vanity.

⁽¹⁾ By the poor are meant the humble, the afflicted, and the helpless.

8. He sitteth in the lurking-places of the villages : in the secret places doth he murder the innocent : his eyes are privily set against the poor.

9. He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den : he lieth in wait to catch the poor : he doth catch the poor when he draweth him into his net.

10. He croucheth and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones.

11. He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten ; he hideth his face ; he will never see it.

12. Arise, O Lord ! O God, lift up thine hand : forget not the humble.

13. Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God ? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it.

14. Thou hast seen it, for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand : the poor committeth himself unto thee : thou art the helper of the fatherless.

15. Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man ; seek out his wickedness till thou find none.

16. The Lord is King for ever and ever : the heathen are perished out of his land.

17. Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble : thou wilt prepare their heart : thou wilt cause thine ear to hear ;

18. To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.

O most gracious God, who, in thy wise providence, hast allotted to mankind poverty or riches, prosperity or afflictions, as trials of their

dependence on thee, and as talents committed to their care ; make us, we beseech thee, duly sensible of the responsibility thou hast laid us under, for the proper use of all thy dispensations. Take from us, O God, all pride and selfishness, and hardness of heart ; subdue in us all covetous desires, and make us to delight in works of mercy and compassion towards our poorer brethren. Endue us, O God, with liberality of soul, as humble instruments in thy hands of blessings to others ; and grant that we may not seek the praise of men, but thy praise, O heavenly Father, who livest and reignest in the unity of the Eternal Trinity, one God, world without end. Amen.

JANUARY.

MAY.

SEPTEMBER.

} PSALMS XI. XII. & XIII.

David cries unto the Lord for help at a time when men, faithful to their God and their king, are oppressed by the ascendancy of proud and deceitful persons. He expresses his confidence that the God of mercy and truth, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, will arise, and will comfort and assist the afflicted ; that he will preserve them from the evil of those

days, when wicked men being in power, virtue is put to rebuke. And as it is said that he will preserve them for ever, so we may trust, that after they have escaped the pollutions of this world, he will conduct them safe to the mansions of eternal purity, where the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. The 13th, and many other psalms, with a mournful beginning, have a triumphant ending, to shew us the prevailing power of devotion, and to convince us that prayer brings with it the comforts of heaven, and revives our weary spirits in the gloomy seasons of sorrow and temptation.

Note.—The 11th and 13th Psalms, and the latter part of the 12th, are copied from the Bible.

PSALM XI.

1. In the Lord put I my trust ; how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain.¹

2. For, lo ! the wicked bend their bow : they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.²

3. If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do ?³

4. ⁴The Lord is in his holy temple : the Lord's throne is in heaven. His eyes behold, his eyelids try the children of men.

⁽¹⁾ This is a taunting expression, as if it were said.—As hills cannot shelter birds, so neither can help be found on *your* mountains.

⁽²⁾ These are still the words of David's advisers.

⁽³⁾ Meaning the foundations of religion and law.

⁽⁴⁾ The Psalmist here replies to his advisers.

5. The Lord trieth the righteous ; but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth.

6. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest : this shall be the portion of their cup.⁵

7. For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness : his countenance doth behold the upright.

PSALM XII.

1. Help me, Lord, for there is not one godly man left ; for the faithful are minished from among the children of men.

2. They talk of vanity every one with his neighbour : they do but flatter with their lips, and dissemble in their double heart.¹

3. ²The Lord shall root out all deceitful lips ; and the tongue that speaketh proud things,

4. Which have said, With our tongue will we prevail ; we are they that ought to speak ; who is Lord over us ?

5. ³Now for the comfortless troubles' sake of the needy, and because of the deep sighing of the poor ;

6. I will up, saith the Lord, and will help every one from him that swelleth against him, and will set him at rest.

7. The words of the Lord are pure words ; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.⁴

(⁵) The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are set forth for an example.

(¹) When men cease to be faithful to their God, who can expect to find them faithful to each other ?

(²) The 3d and 4th verses are connected

with each other. The tongue of infidelity speaketh proud things.

(³) Jehovah is here introduced comforting those who are oppressed.

(⁴) Free from the dross of deceit and insincerity.

8. Thou shalt keep them,⁵ O Lord; thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

9. The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.

PSALM XIII.

1. ¹How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?

2. How long shall I take counsel² in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?

3. Consider and hear me, O Lord, my God; lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;

4. Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.

5. But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.

6. I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.

O Lord, who art our hope, and our refuge, and the exceeding great reward of all who trust in thee, have mercy upon us thy servants, whose confidence is in thine infinite goodness and loving-kindness. Defend us, we beseech thee, from all dangers, both ghostly and bodily:

⁽⁵⁾ Thou shalt keep *them*, thy words, or promise: thou shalt preserve thy servants from an evil generation. of sorrow and mourning, ends in joy and praise, after expressing trust in God's mercy.

⁽¹⁾ This Psalm, which begins in a strain ⁽²⁾ Or be so perplexed.

thou seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves, but that our sufficiency is of thee alone. Be present, therefore, O God, to succour us, wheresoever, by the prevalence of evil, we are compassed about with iniquity. Let not man have the upper hand, but stretch forth the right hand of thy majesty to save and defend us; and grant that, being delivered from all adversities here, we may at last be admitted into the glorious fellowship of saints and angels, through the merits and for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

JANUARY. }
MAY. }
SEPTEMBER. } PSALMS XIV. & XV.

We are to consider the 14th Psalm as exposing the principles and practices of those who oppose the Gospel of Christ: the sad consequence of defection in principle is corruption in practice. The wicked man, here called a fool, hath said in his heart there is no God: infidelity is the beginning of sin; folly is the foundation of infidelity; and the heart is the seat of both of them.

Had the 15th Psalm been composed after the introduction of Christianity, the author would doubtless have exclaimed, “ Lord, who shall dwell in thy presence, or who shall rest in thy holy habitation ?” If we consider the points of character enumerated in the answer to this question as evidences of a humble, a pious, and a charitable mind — as evidences of having before our eyes the fear and the love of God — as evidences of faith in Christ, and a hope of everlasting rewards, — then Christians may consider the Psalm as applying to themselves, and may exclaim, whoso doeth these things shall never fall : if he stumble through weakness, he shall be lifted up by grace ; if he does but strive against sin, and repents thereof, his sins and iniquities shall be remembered no more.

PSALM XIV.

1. The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt ; they have done abominable works : there is none that doeth good.

2. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.

3. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy ; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

4. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge ? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord.

5. There were they in great fear : for God is in the generation of the righteous.

6. Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor,¹ because the Lord is his refuge.

7. Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion ! When the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.

PSALM XV.

1. Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle ? or who shall rest upon thy holy hill ?

2. Even he that leadeth an uncorrupt life, and doeth the thing which is right, and speaketh the truth from his heart.

3. He that hath used no deceit in his tongue, nor done evil to his neighbour ; and hath not slandered his neighbour.

4. ²He that setteth not by himself, but is lowly in his own eyes ; and maketh much of them that fear the Lord.

5. He that sweareth unto his neighbour, and disappointeth him not, though it were to his own hinderance.

6. He that hath not given his money upon usury ; nor taken reward against the innocent.

7. Whoso doeth these things shall never fall.

O Lord, let thy mercy preserve us in holiness and innocency ; or if, through infirmity, we fall,

(¹) Scoffed at his dependence upon God. temned, but he honoureth them that fear

(²) Bible translation of the 4th verse. the Lord."

" In whose eyes a vile person is con-

make us to rise again by penitence ; that we may lead an uncorrupt life with humility, and truth, and justice : not slandering our neighbour — not invading his right — not breaking our trust — not oppressing the indigent and necessitous, but doing good to all, and especially making much of them that fear the Lord ; that we may never fall from thy favour, but, at the end of our weary pilgrimage, may take our rest upon thy holy hill, and dwell in thy tabernacle, where thou reignest with infinite glory, God eternal, world without end. Amen.

JANUARY. }
MAY. } PSALM XVI.
SEPTEMBER. }

The whole of this Psalm is uttered in the person of the Messiah, our great High Priest. It furnishes language in which the pious Christian may express his confidence in God : his gratitude for His mercies, and for the hope of everlasting life confirmed to him by the accomplishment of the prophecy contained at the close of the 11th verse, that the human body of Christ, the Holy One of God, should not see corruption. The words, “ For why,” connect

so closely the hope of the flesh, with the certainty that the soul should not be left in hades—that is, in a state of separation from the body—that we may consider the whole passage, from the 8th verse to the end of the Psalm, as a beautiful exposition of the feelings which the believer in Christ is authorized to entertain, when contemplating his removal from this world to a better.

1. Preserve me, O God ; for in thee have I put my trust.

2. O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my God, my goods are nothing unto thee.¹

3. All my delight is upon the saints that are in the earth ; and upon such as excel in virtue.

4. But they that run after another God, shall have great trouble.

5. Their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer ; neither make mention of their names within my lips.

6. The Lord himself is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup : thou shalt maintain my lot.

7. The lot is fallen unto me in a fair ground ; yea, I have a goodly heritage.

8. I will thank the Lord for giving me warning ; my reins² also gladden me in the night season.

9. I have set God always before me ; for he is on my right hand, therefore I shall not fall.

10. Wherefore my heart was glad, and my glory³ rejoiced : my flesh also shall rest in hope.

(1) All I possess, and all I can do, can add nothing to thy perfections or to thy glory.

(2) The tongue of man, when pouring forth praises to God, is here called "his glory."

(3) The word reins means "inmost thoughts."

11. For why? Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell; neither shalt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.

12. Thou shalt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is the fulness of joy; and at thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore.

O God! who art become to us through Christ Jesus the portion of our inheritance, and our merciful God; preserve and maintain in us, we beseech thee, all those good things which thou hast wrought in us and for us; and that we may never fall, give us thy grace, that we may set thee always before us, rejoicing in thee, and giving praise for the operation of thy hands. Grant that all carnal affections may die in us, and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in us, so that when our flesh faileth, we may be joyful through hope of a glorious resurrection to eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our only Advocate and Redeemer. Amen.

JANUARY.

MAY.

SEPTEMBER.

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PSALM XVII.

Whatever dangers may terrify — whatever troubles disturb — whatever enemies oppress

us, — the Lord will hearken unto every prayer that goeth out of sincere and unfeigned lips, and will hold up our goings in his paths of righteousness, if we ourselves be sincerely mindful to walk in them. What gracious figures are employed to teach and assure us of the Lord's tender care for his people : they are kept as the tender pupil of the eye ; they are safe as a bird under the shadow of its mother's wing. How does this encourage us to trust and serve him ; to look beyond this poor perishable world, in which the children of vanity have their portion, and look forward to an eternal world of peace and joy.

1. ¹Hear the right, O Lord, consider my complaint ; and hearken unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips.

2. Let my sentence come forth from thy presence, and let thine eyes look upon the thing that is equal.

3. Thou hast proved and visited mine heart in the night season ; thou hast tried me, and shalt find no wickedness in me ; for I am utterly purposed that my mouth shall not offend.

4. Because of men's works, that are done against the words of thy lips ; I have kept me from the ways of the destroyer.

5. O hold thou up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.

6. I have called upon thee, O God, for thou shalt hear me ; incline thine ear to me, and hearken unto my words.

⁽¹⁾ The Psalmist speaks in the person of the Messiah.

7. Shew thy marvellous loving-kindness, thou that art the Saviour of them which put their trust in thee, from such as resist thy right hand.

8. Keep me as the apple of an eye ; hide me under the shadow of thy wings,

9. From the ungodly that trouble me : mine enemies compass me round about to take away my life.

10. They are enclosed in their own fat : and their mouth speaketh proud things.

11. They lie waiting in our way on every side, turning their eyes down to the ground ;

12. Like as a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as it were a lion's whelp lurking in secret places.

13. Up, Lord ; disappoint him, and cast him down ; deliver my soul from the ungodly, which is a sword of thine :

14. From the men of thy hand, O Lord, from the men, I say, and from the evil world, which have their portion in this life, whose bellies thou fillest with thy hid treasure.

15. They have children at their desire, and leave the rest of their substance for their babes.

16. But as for me, I will behold thy presence in righteousness : and when I awake up after thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it.

Almighty God, who, dwelling in the highest heavens, yet vouchsafest to behold thy creatures here upon earth ; we humbly adore thy sacred Majesty, and with all the powers of our souls

and bodies, do exalt and praise thy holy name, for all the mercies and comforts of this life, and for the hopes and assurance of a better ; for preserving us from the evils and dangers of the night past, and for bringing us in health and safety to the light of a new day. Continue to us, we beseech thee, this thy mercy and goodness, and as thou hast awakened our bodies from sleep, so raise our souls from the death of sin unto a life of righteousness. Deliver us, O God, from all the evils incident to our connection with this world, and guide our feet into the paths of peace and holiness : strengthen our resolutions to embrace all opportunities of doing good, and carefully to avoid all occasions of evil ; and when, through frailty, or the violence of temptation, we fall from our duty, do thou in mercy restore us again with a double portion of thy Holy Spirit, and enable us to maintain a more successful defence for the future. Grant, O Lord, that this family and household may abound more and more in love for thee, and in zeal for thy honour and glory ; that it may be, amongst many others, the humble means of keeping alive a spirit of piety in this kingdom and people, that thou mayest bless us and preserve to us a knowledge of thy salvation. Hear us, O merciful Father, for thy dear Son's sake, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

JANUARY. }
MAY. }
SEPTEMBER. } PSALM XVIII.

This is a Psalm of thanksgiving offered up at the close of David's life, and is recorded as part of his history in the twenty-second chapter of the second book of Samuel. In it he recurs to the glorious displays of God's immediate providence over and in behalf of his chosen people, and the figurative representations he makes of the effects of God's presence and of his wrath, cannot but raise in us awful apprehensions of his divine majesty.

We shall never attain a profitable conception of the true meaning of the Psalms, unless we connect in our minds God's government of his people under the first covenant, with his government of their hearts and minds under the second covenant. We must consider Jerusalem that was, as a type of the Christian Church and of Jerusalem that shall be ; and by the enemies of David, we must understand the enemies of Christ, and the spiritual enemies which each member of Christ has to contend with.

PART FIRST.

1. I will love thee, O Lord, my strength; the Lord is my stony rock and my defence, my Saviour, my God, and my might, in whom I will trust, my buckler, the horn also of my salvation, and my refuge.

2. I will call upon the Lord, which is worthy to be praised; so shall I be safe from mine enemies.

3. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the overflowings of ungodliness made me afraid.¹

4. The pains of hell came about me; the snares of death overtook me.

5. In my trouble I will call upon the Lord, and complain unto my God.

6. So shall he hear my voice out of his holy temple, and my complaint shall come before him; it shall enter even into his ears.

7. The earth trembled and quaked; the very foundations also of the hills shook, and were removed, because he was wroth.

8. There went a smoke out in his presence, and a consuming fire out of his mouth, so that coals were kindled at it.

9. He bowed the heavens also, and came down; and it was dark under his feet.

10. He rode upon the cherubims, and did fly: He came flying upon the wings of the wind.

11. He made darkness his secret place, his pavilion round about him with dark water, and thick clouds to cover him.

12. At the brightness of his presence, his clouds removed, hailstones, and coals of fire.

⁽¹⁾ David, surrounded by Saul and his blood-thirsty attendants, was a lively emblem of the suffering Jesus.

13. The Lord also thundered out of heaven ; and the Highest gave his thunder, hailstones, and coals of fire.

14. He sent out his arrows, and scattered them ; he cast forth lightnings, and destroyed them.

15. The springs of waters were seen, and the foundations of the round world were discovered at thy chiding, O Lord, at the blasting of the breath of thy displeasure.

16. He shall send down from on high to fetch me, and shall take me out of many waters.

17. He shall deliver me from my strongest enemy, and from them which hate me, for they are too mighty for me.

18. They prevented me in the day of my trouble, but the Lord was my upholder.

19. He brought me forth also into a place of liberty : He brought me forth, even because he had a favour unto me.

20. The Lord shall reward me after my righteous dealing ; according to the cleanness of my hands shall he recompense me.²

21. Because I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not forsaken my God, as the wicked doth.

22. For I have an eye unto all his laws, and will not cast out his commandments from me.

23. I was also uncorrupt before him, and eschewed mine own wickedness.

24. Therefore shall the Lord reward me after my righteous dealing, and according unto the cleanness of my hands in his eye-sight.

(²) We must suppose the Psalmist to speak prophetically in the character of the Messiah.

PART SECOND.

25. With the holy, thou shalt be holy ; and with a perfect man thou shalt be perfect.

26. With the pure thou shalt shew thyself pure ; and with the froward thou shalt shew thyself froward.

27. For thou shalt save the people that are in adversity, and shalt bring down the high looks of the proud.

28. Thou also shalt light my candle ; the Lord my God shall make my darkness to be light.

29. For in thee I shall discomfit an host of men, and with the help of my God, I shall leap over the wall.

30. The way of God is an undefiled way ; the word of the Lord also is tried in the fire : He is the defender of all them that put their trust in him.

31. For who is God, save the Lord ; or who is a rock, save our God ?

32. ³It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.

33. He maketh my feet like hart's feet, and setteth me up on high.

34. He teacheth mine hands to fight, and mine arms shall break even a bow of steel.

35. Thou hast given me the defence of thy salvation : Thy right hand also shall hold me up, and thy loving correction shall make me great.

36. Thou shalt make room enough under me for to go, that my footsteps shall not slide.

37. I will follow upon mine enemies and overtake

⁽³⁾ The gifts of God to the spiritual warrior are here enumerated.

them; neither will I turn again till I have destroyed them.

38. I will smite them that they shall not be able to stand, but fall under my feet.

39. Thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle: Thou shalt throw down mine enemies under me.

40. Thou hast made mine enemies also to turn their backs upon me, and I shall destroy them that hate me.

41. They shall cry, but there shall be none to help them; yea, even unto the Lord shall they cry, but he shall not hear them.

42. I will beat them as small as the dust before the wind; I will cast them out as the clay in the streets.

43. Thou shalt deliver me from the strivings of the people, and thou shalt make me the head of the heathen.⁴

44. A people whom I have not known shall serve me.

45. As soon as they hear of me they shall obey me, but the strange children shall dissemble with me.

46. The strange children shall fail, and be afraid out of their prisons.

47. The Lord liveth, and blessed be my strong helper, and praised be the God of my salvation.

48. Even the God that seeth I be avenged, and subdueth the people unto me.

49. It is he that delivereth me from my cruel enemies, and setteth me up above mine adversaries: Thou shalt rid me from the wicked man.

⁽⁴⁾ This cannot be understood otherwise than of Messiah as Head of the Christian Church.

50. For this cause will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the Gentiles, and sing praises unto thy name.⁵

51. Great prosperity giveth he unto his king, and sheweth loving-kindness unto David his Anointed, and unto his seed for evermore.

Almighty and ever-living God, who didst so love the world as to give thine only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life, mercifully hear us when we call upon thee in his name, and grant to us now, we most humbly beseech thee, the strengthening and increasing of our faith. Make us rightly to understand what Christ our Saviour has done and suffered for us. Fill our hearts with gratitude, and our tongues with praise, and help us to shew forth our love towards thee, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by devoting ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days. But, O Lord, of thy tender mercy, pour out upon us the gracious influences of thy Holy Spirit, for of ourselves we can do nothing; we are weak and sinful creatures, ready continually to fall into evil; but do thou mercifully put into our hearts

⁽⁵⁾ This verse is produced by St Paul as a proof that the Gentiles were one day to glorify God for the mercy vouchsafed them by Jesus Christ, unto his seed, that is, unto all the sons of God through Christ, who through faith and patience shall inherit the promises.

a dread of sin, and so guide us by thy counsel, and uphold us with thy might, that we may be enabled to subdue the enemies of our salvation, and so to pass through things temporal that we finally lose not the things eternal; and this we beg for Jesus Christ, his sake. Amen.

JANUARY.

MAY.

SEPTEMBER.

}

PSALM XIX.

Who can contemplate that glorious luminary, the sun, or think upon the revolutions of day and night, summer and winter, alternately diffusing light, or inviting to rest, and enabling man to derive sustenance from the earth, without adoring the majesty and goodness of the great Creator, — of him who made the sun, but who made light before he made the sun! So, in like manner, if we direct our contemplation to the Sun of Righteousness, to the Light of the spiritual world, risen with healing on his wings, and shedding forth the beams of his glorious gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth, shall we not fall low on our knees before his footstool, praying for his pardoning grace to cleanse us from our secret faults, and for his restraining grace to keep us from presumptuous sins.

St Paul has cited the fourth verse of this Psalm in his Epistle to the Romans, and therein taught us to raise our thoughts from things temporal to things spiritual, from the glorious works of creation to the still more glorious work of redemption.

1. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work.

2. One day telleth another, and one night certi-
fieth another.

3. There is neither speech nor language where
their voice is not heard.

4. Their sound is gone out into all lands; and
their words unto the end of the world.

5. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,
which cometh forth as a bridegroom out of his
chamber, and rejoiceth as a giant to run his course.

6. It goeth forth from the uttermost part of the
heaven, and runneth about unto the end of it again,
and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

7. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the
soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise
the simple.

8. The statutes of the Lord are right, and rejoice
the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure,
and giveth light unto the eyes.

9. The fear of the Lord is clean, and endureth for
ever; the judgments of the Lord are true, and
righteous altogether.

10. More to be desired are they than gold; yea,
than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and
the honey-comb.

11. Moreover, by them is thy servant taught; and in keeping of them there is great reward.

12. Who can tell how oft he offendeth? oh, cleanse thou me from my secret faults.

13. Keep thy servant also from presumptuous sins, lest they get the dominion over me; so shall I be undefiled and innocent from the great offence.

14. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

O great and glorious Lord God, who created the heavens and the earth, and upholdest them all by the word of thy power, we adore and praise thy holy name for all thy mercies, both temporal and spiritual. Give us, we beseech thee, a lively sense of all the blessings we enjoy, and make us truly thankful, not only for our support and happiness here below, but for the hope of salvation through Jesus Christ. Enable us to mortify all our corrupt and sinful affections, all pride, covetousness, and every evil passion, and to purify our hearts that they may bring forth the fruits of charity and love, obedience to thy laws, and patience and comfort in thy Holy Word. And grant, O Lord, that we may so read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest those Scriptures which thou hast caused to be written for our learning, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of

eternal life, which thou hast given us in thy Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ ; to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

JANUARY. }
MAY. }
SEPTEMBER. } PSALMS XX. & XXI.

In the twentieth Psalm, the Psalmist, in a primary sense, speaks in the person of the priests of the Temple, addressing the monarch upon occasion of his coming to offer sacrifice before he set out upon some warlike expedition : but in a secondary and more important sense, he speaks in the person of the Church addressing the Messiah, and praying for the happy accomplishment of his warfare against the enemies of our salvation. Against these enemies we are all bound to struggle, and the first step to victory is to renounce all confidence in our own strength, and having done this, to go forth in the strength of the Lord God.

In the twenty-first Psalm, the victories of the Redeemer are the subject of thanksgiving : the joy of the Church is in the salvation of Christ,

and the joy of every individual is in the application of that salvation to himself and to all around him.

PSALM XX.

1. The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the Name¹ of the God of Jacob defend thee :

2. Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Sion :

3. Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice :

4. Grant thee thy heart's desire, and fulfil all thy mind.

5. We will rejoice in thy salvation, and triumph in the name of the Lord our God : the Lord perform all thy petitions.

6. Now know I, that the Lord helpeth his anointed, and will hear him from his holy heaven, even with the saving strength of his right hand.

7. ²Some put their trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.

8. They are brought down and fallen, but we are risen, and stand upright.

9. Save, Lord, and hear us, O King of heaven, when we call upon thee.

PSALM XXI.

1. The king shall rejoice in thy strength, O Lord ; exceeding glad shall he be of thy salvation.

(¹) "The Name" includes the power, goodness, and providence of God.

(²) Whatever may be man's natural means of deliverance, his preservation must be the work of God's right hand.

2. 'Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not denied him the request of his lips.

3. For thou shalt prevent² him with the blessings of goodness, and shalt set a crown of pure gold upon his head.

4. He asked life of thee, and thou gavest him a long life, even for ever and ever.³

5. His honour is great in thy salvation ; glory and great worship shalt thou lay upon him.

6. For thou shalt give him everlasting felicity, and make him glad with the joy of thy countenance.

7. And why ? Because the king putteth his trust in the Lord ; and in the mercy of the Most Highest he shall not miscarry.

8. All thine enemies shall feel thy hand ; thy right hand shall find out them that hate thee.

9. Thou shalt make them like a fiery oven in time of thy wrath : the Lord shall destroy them in his displeasure, and the fire shall consume them.

10. Their fruit shalt thou root out of the earth, and their seed from among the children of men.⁴

11. For they intended mischief against thee, and imagined such a device as they are not able to perform.

12. Therefore shalt thou put them to flight ; and the strings of thy bow shalt thou make ready against the face of them.

13. Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength ; so will we sing and praise thy power.

(1) In the first seven verses the pronoun "Thou" refers to Jehovah. In the latter part of the Psalm, to Messiah.

(2) "To prevent," means to go before.

(3) Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more.

(4) Elsewhere we read that the generation of the faithful shall be blessed ; but here a wo is denounced upon the seed of the wicked. O ye who are parents, be wise.

O blessed Jesus, King of kings and Lord of lords, who, after thy conquest over the grave and over hell, didst ascend in great triumph into thy kingdom in heaven, that thou mightest prepare mansions of eternal bliss for them that love thee, and who hast graciously promised that thou wilt send the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to sustain the poor in spirit,—look down with compassion upon us, thy frail and erring creatures, who seek refuge in thy strength. Mortify in us all carnal and worldly lusts ; and let all things belonging to the Spirit live and grow in us, that as individual members of thy Church on earth, we may adorn the doctrine of thee our Saviour in all things. We pray thee, O Lord, to bless and protect the Church of this nation, counteract all the designs of her enemies, and grant that she may unite under her banners all them that love thy name. Draw together, we beseech thee, the hearts of thy faithful people in unity of spirit, and by the bands of love, that we may be actuated by all the charities of a common faith—a common interest in the merits of a crucified Redeemer, and may, with one heart and one mind, join in praising thy holy name, who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever. Amen.

JANUARY.

MAY.

SEPTEMBER.

}

PSALM XXII.

This Psalm consists of two parts : the former, from verse one to twenty-one, treateth of the passion or suffering of Christ ; the latter, from verse twenty-two to verse thirty-two, treateth of his resurrection, and of the propagation of the Gospel. Whatever reference David may have had to his own sufferings, or to his own condition, yet he was carried forward, by the spirit of prophecy, beyond himself unto Christ, whose words and whose sufferings are here shewn forth with an exactness as great as if the Psalm had been written subsequent to, instead of a thousand years previous to, the coming of Christ in the flesh. God was pleased that all these things should be foretold by David, to the end that when they came to pass, we might have the clearest proof of Christ's being the true Messiah. The contemplation, therefore, of this Psalm ought, on the one hand, to strengthen our faith in Jesus, the Saviour of the world ; and, on the other hand, to quicken our hopes in him ; while it sets before us the glory to which God exalted him after his sufferings.

The importance of this Psalm calls for additional observations on each verse, which should be attentively studied in private.

PART FIRST.

1. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ; why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my complaint ?

2. O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest not ; and in the night season also I take no rest.

3. And thou continuest holy, O thou Worship of Israel.

4. Our fathers hoped in thee ; they trusted in thee, and thou didst deliver them.

5. They called upon thee, and were delivered ; they put their trust in thee, and were not confounded.

6. But as for me, I am a worm, and no man ; a very scorn of men, and the outcast of the people.

7. All they that see me laugh me to scorn ; they shoot out their lips and shake their heads, saying,

8. He trusted in God, that he would deliver him : let Him deliver him, if He will have him.

1. Here we have the very words of Christ himself just before he gave up the ghost : if the master thus underwent the trial of a spiritual desertion, why doth the disciple think it strange if he experience the same ?

2. Even our Lord prayed that, if possible, the cup might pass from him : let man be instant in prayer, but not impatient for a return of his prayer.

4. God knows what it is fit for him to do, and for us to suffer.

6. Behold the Redeemer, humble, silent, and innocent — behold him buffeted and spit upon.

7. “ And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, — Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself.

8. Likewise, also, the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, — He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him, for he said, I am the Son of God.”

9. But thou art He that did take me out of my mother's womb : thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts.

10. I have been left unto thee ever since I was born : thou art my God even from my mother's womb.

11. O go not from me, for trouble is hard at hand, and there is none to help me.

12. Many oxen are come about me ; fat bulls of Basan close me in on every side.

13. They gape upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.

14. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint : my heart also in the midst of my body is even like melting wax.

15. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my gums, and thou shalt bring me into the dust of death.

16. For many dogs are come about me, and the counsel of the wicked layeth siege against me.

17. They pierced my hands and my feet ; I may tell all my bones ; they stand staring and looking upon me.

9 & 10. We are all God's children by adoption through Christ ; we are all in the hands of a gracious Providence from our birth to the time when the spirit returns to him who gave it.

11 to 13. "Fat bulls of Basan" is a figurative expression, to denote those who are surfeited with the good things of this world ; who are swollen with pride, who become neglectful of the God who made them, and of the rock of their salvation : such were the persons who compassed about the blessed Jesus in his hour of suffering.

14 to 16. The Gospel tells us that our Saviour was exceeding sorrowful even unto

death ; that his sweat was as it were great drops of blood ; the vehemence of his sufferings (or as it is frequently termed, his passion) drying up all the fluids, brought on intense thirst. The Jewish blood-hounds took counsel against him ; they sought false witnesses ; they cried out, "Away with him, away with him—Crucify him, crucify him."

17 & 18. We know that this is prophecy and not history, and yet how exactly was it fulfilled. The Lord of Life extended on the cross, bleeding, was a spectacle to heaven and earth. By his blood we are cleansed.

18. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

19. But be not thou far from me, O Lord : thou art my succour ; haste thee to help me.

20. Deliver my soul from the sword ; my darling from the power of the dog.

21. Save me from the lion's mouth. Thou hast heard me also from among the horns of the unicorns.

PART SECOND.

22. I will declare thy name unto my brethren : in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

23. O praise the Lord, ye that fear him ; magnify him, all ye of the seed of Jacob ; and fear him, all ye seed of Israel.

24. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted ; neither hath he hid his face from him ; but when he cried unto him, he heard him.

25. My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation : I will pay my vows before them that fear him.

19. Messiah here resumes the prayer with which the Psalm commenced, praying for a manifestation of divine power on his behalf.

20 & 21. The wrath of God was the sword which took vengeance on sin, in the person of the Messiah. The term " my darling," has also been translated " my united one," denoting perhaps the humanity of Christ in union with the divinity. The ravening fury of savage beasts is used to describe the rage of the devil, and his guiles spiritual as well as temporal.

22. The Psalm now becomes a hymn of praise or triumph in the mouth of the Redeemer, celebrating his victory and its consequences.

23 & 24. The great subjects of praise and thanksgiving in the Church, are the acceptance of the sufferings of Jesus as a propitiation for the sins of the world, which acceptance was testified by raising him from the dead, inasmuch as the discharge of the surety proves the payment of the debt.

25 & 26. The vow of Christ was to build and to consecrate to Jehovah a spiritual temple, in which the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise should be continually offered. Thus, a spiritual banquet is prepared for the meek and lowly in heart, and they that hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled, and they shall live for ever in heaven.

26. The meek shall eat and be satisfied ; they shall praise the Lord that seek him ; your heart shall live for ever.

27. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him.

28. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the Governor among the nations.

29. All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship.

30. All they that go down to the dust shall kneel before him, and none can keep alive his own soul.

31. My seed shall serve him ; they shall be counted to the Lord for a generation.

32. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, whom the Lord hath made.

O blessed Jesus, who for our sakes didst suffer thyself to be betrayed and crucified, that thou mightest purchase for us remission of our sins ; deliver our souls, we beseech thee, from

27 & 28. The great truths of man's creation and fall, with the promise of a Redeemer to come, were forgotten by the nations after their apostacy from the true God ; but were recalled to the mind of man by the writings of Moses, of the Prophets, and of the Apostles ; and by these they were converted to the faith of Christ.

29 & 30. The rich as well as the poor (the fat upon earth as well as the meek) are invited to a participation in the

triumphs of Christ, if haply they seek the Way, the Truth, and the Life. All must stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

31 & 32. The children of the promise (that is, of the promise to Abraham) are counted for the seed. The faithful in Christ are those of his household and generation, gathered out of all the kingdoms of the earth. They shall be compacted together in one body, having fellowship with Christ, now and for evermore.

the power and enticements of the devil. Let not sin reign in our mortal bodies, that we should obey the lusts thereof, but create us anew in thy likeness, and grant that we may bring forth the fruits of the Spirit in meekness and righteousness. O merciful Saviour, grant that those victories which thou hast obtained over Satan, hell, and the grave, may bring us to God ; that, through the instrumentality of thy good Spirit, every evil propensity of our nature may be subdued in us ; that we may live as always dying, being more and more conformed to thy image, and made daily more and more fit for the enjoyment of thy presence ; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, henceforth and for ever. Amen.

JANUARY.

MAY.

SEPTEMBER.

} PSALMS XXIII. & XXIV.

How comforting, how consoling are the words of the twenty-third Psalm to the wearied and fainting soul of the Christian, seeing that the Lord is to him as a shepherd to his sheep ; he fears no evil ; he looks to his loving-kind-

ness and mercy, and to the everlasting rest prepared for him in heaven !

The twenty-fourth Psalm was composed upon occasion of the removal of the ark to Mount Sion, an event typical of our Lord's ascension into heaven. It opens with a chorus proclaiming the divinity of Jehovah, the Creator and Lord of the universe ; it then describes, in questions and answers, sung by different voices, the sort of righteousness which recommends to God's favour, which consists not in any merely ceremonial observances, but in clean hands and a pure heart. Such as is here described ought the people to be who seek the Lord, and who desire to dwell everlastingly in his presence. The song concludes with a prediction of the exaltation of Messiah, under the image of an entry of Jehovah into his temple.

* The translation of this Psalm by Bishop Horsley is given below.

PSALM XXIII.

1. The Lord is my Shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing.
2. He shall feed me in a green pasture, and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort.
3. He shall convert my soul,¹ and bring me forth in the paths of righteousness, for his Name's sake.
4. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the

⁽¹⁾ He restoreth my soul. — *Bible version.*

shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me : thy rod and thy staff comfort me.

5. Thou shalt prepare a table before me in the presence of mine enemies : thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full.²

6. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

PSALM XXIV.*

1. The earth is the Lord's, and all that therein is ; the compass of the world, and they that dwell therein.

2. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and prepared it upon the floods.

3. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord ? or who shall rise up in his holy place ?

4. Even he that hath clean hands and a pure heart, and that hath not lift up his mind unto vanity, nor sworn to deceive his neighbour.

5. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

⁽²⁾ Here is an allusion to the custom prevalent at Jewish feasts, of anointing the guests, and filling to the brim the cup of a favoured guest.

* BISHOP HORSLEY'S TRANSLATION.

PART FIRST.

Chorus.

1. To Jehovah belongeth the earth, and its whole furniture,
The world and its inhabitants.
2. For he hath founded it upon the seas,
And upon the floods he hath established it.

First Voice.

3. Who shall ascend the mountain of Jehovah,
And who shall stand within the precincts of his sanctuary ?

Second Voice.

4. The clean in hand and pure in heart,
Who hath not carried his soul to vanity,
And hath not sworn to the deceiving of his neighbour.
5. This man shall obtain blessing from Jehovah,
And justification from the God of his salvation.

6. This is the generation of them that seek him ; even of them that seek thy face, O Jacob.

7. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.

8. Who is the King of Glory ? It is the Lord, strong and mighty ! even the Lord, mighty in battle !

9. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.

10. Who is the King of Glory ? Even the Lord of hosts ; he is the King of Glory.

O God, whose blessed Son was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil, and make us the sons of God, and heirs of eternal life ; grant us, we beseech thee, that having this hope, we may purify ourselves, even as he is pure ; that when he shall appear again

Chorus.

6. This is the generation of them that seek after him ;
Of them that seek thy presence, O God of Jacob.

PART SECOND.

Semichorus.

7. O ye gates, lift up your heads,
And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors,
And let the King of glory enter.

A Single Voice.

8. Who is he, this King of glory ?

Another Voice.

Jehovah, strong and mighty,
Jehovah, mighty in battle.

Semichorus.

9. O ye gates, lift up your heads,
And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors,
And let the King of glory enter.

A Single Voice.

10. Who is this King of glory ?

Grand Chorus.

Jehovah of hosts ! he is the King of glory.

with power and great glory, we may be made like unto him, in his eternal and glorious kingdom ; where, with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, he liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. Amen.

O God, the King of Glory, who hast exalted thine only Son, Jesus Christ, with great triumph into thy kingdom in heaven ; we beseech thee, leave us not comfortless, but send to us thy Holy Ghost, to comfort us, and exalt us unto the same place, whither our Saviour Christ is gone before : and this we humbly beg through the all-prevailing merits of the same our blessed Redeemer and Advocate. Amen.

JANUARY.

MAY.

SEPTEMBER.

}

PSALM XXV.

What beautiful and touching language is here offered to the humble-minded Christian, in which to lift up his soul unto God ! It needs no comment. To those who truly humble themselves before God, he shews the covenant of mercy, and makes their soul to dwell at ease ; and over those who, instead of

wishing for the good things of this world, pray that Christ's perfectness and righteous dealing may wait upon them, he will undoubtedly throw the mantle of his justifying merits, in the awful day of general retribution.

1. Unto thee, O Lord, will I lift up my soul : my God, I have put my trust in thee : O let me not be confounded, neither let mine enemies triumph over me.¹

2. For all they that hope in thee shall not be ashamed ; but such as transgress without a cause² shall be put to confusion.

3. Shew me thy ways, O Lord, and teach me thy paths.

4. Lead me forth in thy truth, and teach me, for thou art the God of my salvation ; on thee do I wait all the day long.

5. Call to remembrance, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving-kindnesses, which have been ever of old.

6. O remember not the sins and offences of my youth, but according to thy mercy think thou upon me, O Lord, for thy goodness.

7. Gracious and righteous is the Lord ; therefore will he teach sinners in the way.³

8. Them that are meek shall he guide in judgment, and such as are gentle, them shall he learn his way.

9. All the paths⁴ of the Lord are mercy and

(¹) Cares and pleasures are the weights which press the soul to earth.

(²) Idolaters and infidels.

(³) He hates sin and loves righteousness : he sent his Son to suffer for the one, and his Spirit to produce the other.

(⁴) That is, his dispensations.

truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.

10. For thy Name's sake,⁵ O Lord, be merciful unto my sin, for it is great.

11. What man is he that feareth the Lord, him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.

12. His soul shall dwell at ease, and his seed shall inherit the land.

13. The secret of the Lord is among them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant.

14. Mine eyes are ever looking unto the Lord; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.⁶

15. Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me, for I am desolate and in misery.

16. The sorrows of my heart are enlarged : O bring thou me out of my troubles.⁷

17. Look upon mine adversity and misery, and forgive me all my sin.⁸

18. Consider mine enemies, how many they are; and they hate me with cruel hatred.

19. O keep my soul and deliver me ; let me not be confounded, for I have put my trust in thee.

20. Let perfectness and righteous dealing wait upon me, for my hope hath been in thee.⁹

21. Deliver Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

⁽⁵⁾ Wherein is comprised mercy and truth. or later perceive that God alone can bring him out of his distresses.

⁽⁶⁾ A bird taken in the snare of the fowler, is a fine emblem of the soul entangled in the cares or pleasures of the world. ⁽⁶⁾ Preservation from sin and deliverance from death are two great gifts of God through Jesus Christ.

⁽⁷⁾ As life is prolonged, troubles are generally enlarged : every man will sooner ⁽⁹⁾ Let integrity and uprightness preserve me.— *Bible translation.*

Let us pray.

O gracious and righteous Lord God, who art the guide of the meek, and teachest the humble and gentle in thy way ; forgive, we most humbly beseech thee, the sins and offences of our youth, and those of our riper years also ; and although by them we have deserved thy wrath, and that we be put to confusion, yet be pleased, O Lord, to think upon us, for thy goodness, and according to thy mercy in Christ Jesus ; that when thou hast forgiven us all our sin, and taken away our adversity and all our misery, thou mayest keep our souls in perfectness and righteous dealing, that at last we may dwell at ease, free from trouble, and safe from all our enemies, even when we shall inherit the land of everlasting rest, where thou livest and reignest, eternal God, world without end. Amen.

JANUARY.

MAY.

SEPTEMBER.

} PSALMS XXVI. & XXVII.

How few, how very few of the sons of men
can invoke God's judgment in the language

which the Psalmist uses in the twenty-sixth Psalm ! How few can thus challenge an examination into their inward thoughts, or who can truly say that the loving-kindness of God is ever before their eyes ! If, then, we dare not apply such self-commendation to our past conduct, let us, in all humility, strive for the future to walk innocently, and let it be our delight not only to praise the Lord in the congregations of our fellow-Christians, but to meditate day and night upon the manifold blessings we enjoy.

A constant desire to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever is the aspiration of the truly devout soul, who esteems all riches as but dross, so that he may win Christ : but even this desire he will keep in subserviency to the good pleasure of God as respects the time of its accomplishment. If impatience for release should be felt as the body decays, he will rebuke his spirit in the words of the Psalmist, " Oh, tarry thou the Lord's leisure ; " and then, taking comfort, he will say unto his soul, " Be strong, and put thou thy trust in the Lord."

x

PSALM XXVI.

1. Be thou my judge, O Lord, for I have walked innocently ; my trust hath been also in the Lord, therefore shall I not fall.

2. Examine me, O Lord, and prove me ; try out my reins¹ and my heart.

3. For thy loving-kindness is ever before mine eyes, and I will walk in thy truth.

4. For I have not dwelt with vain persons, neither will I have fellowship with the deceitful.

5. I have hated the congregation of the wicked, and will not sit among the ungodly.

6. I will wash my hands in innocency, O Lord, and so will I go to thine altar.²

7. That I may shew the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.

8. Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.

9. O shut not up my soul with the sinners, nor my life with the blood-thirsty.

10. In whose hands is wickedness, and their right hand is full of bribes.

11. But as for me, I will walk innocently ; O deliver me, and be merciful unto me.

12. My foot standeth right ;³ I will praise the Lord in the congregations.

PSALM XXVII.

1. ¹The Lord is my light and my salvation ; whom, then, shall I fear ? The Lord is the strength of my life ; of whom, then, shall I be afraid ?

2. When the wicked, even mine enemies and my

(¹) "Reins," inmost thoughts.

(²) It was a custom for a man to wash his hands as a sign of innocency ; also before prayer, as a token of repentance.

(³) The testimony of God's Holy Word is the only sure footing of the Christian.

(¹) The first seven verses appear as if they had originally formed part of the preceding Psalm.

foes, came upon me, to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.²

3. Though an host of men were laid against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid ; and though there rose up war against me, yet will I put my trust in him.

4. One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require, even that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit his temple.³

5. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his tabernacle ; yea, in the secret place of his dwelling shall he hide me, and set me up upon a rock of stone.⁴

6. And now shall he lift up mine head above mine enemies round about me.

7. Therefore will I offer in his dwelling an oblation with great gladness : I will sing and speak praises unto the Lord.

8. ⁵Hearken unto my voice, O Lord, when I cry unto thee, have mercy upon me, and hear me.

9. My heart hath talked of thee, seek ye my face : Thy face, Lord, will I seek.⁶

10. O hide not thou thy face from me, nor cast thy servant away in displeasure.

11. Thou hast been my succour ; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

12. When my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord taketh me up.⁷

(²) The past time is often used in prophetic language to intimate the certainty of the future.

(³) It ought to be the desire of the Christian that he may pass the unnumbered days of eternity in the courts of heaven.

(⁴) Thus through faith the Christian feels assured of victory over all his enemies.

(⁵) This appears as the commencement of a separate Psalm.

(⁶) (When thou saidst,) Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.—*Bible version.*

(⁷) Where worldly comforts end, spiritual ones often begin.

13. Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in the right way, because of mine enemies.

14. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies ; for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.

15. I should utterly have fainted, but that I believe verily to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.⁸

16. O tarry thou the Lord's leisure ; be strong, and he shall comfort thine heart ; and put thou thy trust in the Lord.

O Lord God, thou hast been our succour, our light, and salvation ; leave us not, neither forsake us when we are assaulted by enemies from without, or by temptations from within, but lead us in the way in which we should go. Make us, O God, to take delight in prayer and praise, and in all the other duties of religion ; endue our souls with faith and charity, and holy penitence, that our hearts and hands, our souls and bodies, being washed in innocency, in the waters of repentance, and the blood of the Cross, we may resort to thy holy table whensoever and as oft as opportunities are presented to us ; and there receiving remission of our sins, as well as the spiritual food and sustenance of which we daily stand in need, we

⁽⁸⁾ Faith in the comfortable promises of God can alone revive the drooping soul.

may walk soberly, righteously, and godly in this life present, and in the world to come may have everlasting life, through the merits of Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

JANUARY.

MAY.

SEPTEMBER.

} PSALMS XXVIII. & XXIX.

In the twenty-eighth Psalm, David addresses his heavenly Father in the person either of the Messiah or of the Christian Church, and prophesies the fate of those who oppose the word of God ; for we are to understand as prophecies the imprecations of wrath which the Psalmist utters against the enemies of the Church. The twenty-ninth Psalm has reference to the violent conflict between the Gospel and its opponents in the latter ages. The voice of the Lord designates either the Messiah or his Gospel, the effects of which, in the world and in the Church, are magnificently represented. When we contemplate the force of the elements, or think upon the bulk of water, or of the lightning which is suspended at times over our heads, we are constrained to acknowledge the power

of God, and our dependence upon him for the prolongation of our temporal existence; nor are the dangers less which threaten our spiritual life, and it is by him alone that we can be defended from the powers of darkness.

PSALM XXVIII.

1. Unto thee will I cry, O Lord, my strength; think no scorn of me,¹ lest, if thou make as though thou hearest not, I become like them that go down into the pit.

2. Hear the voice of my humble petitions when I cry unto thee, when I hold up my hands towards the mercy-seat of thy holy temple.

3. O pluck me not away,² neither destroy me with the ungodly and wicked doers, which speak friendly to their neighbours, but imagine mischief in their hearts.

4. ³Reward them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their own inventions.

5. Recompense them after the work of their hands, pay them that they have deserved.

6. For they regard not in their minds the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands; therefore shall he break them down, and not build them up.

7. ⁴Praised be the Lord, for he hath heard the voice of my humble petitions.

(1) Be not silent to me.—*Bible version.* the works of creation, nor those of redemption, can lead to repentance.

(2) Draw me not away.—*Bible version.*

(3) These are prophecies of the divine judgment against all those whom neither

(4) The Psalm now becomes one of praise and thanksgiving.

8. The Lord is my strength and my shield ; my heart hath trusted in him, and I am helped ; therefore my heart danceth for joy, and in my song will I praise him.

9. ⁵The Lord is my strength, and he is the wholesome defence of his Anointed.

10. O save thy people, and give thy blessing unto thine inheritance ; feed them, and set them up for ever.

PSALM XXIX.

1. Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength.

2. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

3. It is the Lord that commandeth the waters ; it is the glorious God that maketh the thunder.

4. It is the Lord that ruleth the sea : the voice of the Lord is mighty in operation ; the voice of the Lord is a glorious voice.

5. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedar trees, yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Libanus.¹

6. He maketh them also to skip like a calf ; Libanus also, and Sirion, like a young unicorn.

7. The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire, the voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness ; yea, the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Cades.²

8. The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to

(¹) He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you, Rom. viii. 11.

(²) The force of lightning is known to

rend the tallest tree ; nor is the word of God less effectual in humbling the pride of man ; witness the conversion of St Paul.

(²) See Isaiah, xl. 3 — 8, also 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

bring forth young, and discovereth the thick bushes ;³ in his temple doth every one speak of his honour.

9. The Lord sitteth above the water-flood, and the Lord remaineth a King for ever.

10. The Lord shall give strength unto his people ; the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace.⁴

O great and glorious Lord God, sometimes thou speakest to man in thunder, sometimes thou speakest in the " still small voice " of conscience : thou hast called him to repentance by the voice of one crying in the wilderness ; and thou wilt call him from death to judgment by the voice of the once crucified Redeemer. O give us awful apprehensions of thy majesty and justice, and at the same time a sweet reliance on thy fatherly care, on thy mercy, and on thy loving-kindness to us for Christ's sake. Endue us with strength through the Holy Spirit, and speak peace to our souls ; let us not slumber in doing the work thou hast appointed for us to do here below, and grant that we may finally attain unto thy heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

⁽³⁾ This may be rendered, " The voice of the Lord maketh the oaks to tremble, and discovereth the forests." The Lord will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart. 1 Cor. iv. 5. Heb. iv. 13.

⁽⁴⁾ Christ is " the Prince of Peace."

JANUARY.

MAY.

SEPTEMBER.

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PSALM XXX.

This Psalm, as a religious song of thanksgiving, is particularly adapted to persons who have been in great danger, or in great affliction : such persons are called on to celebrate God's goodness, and they should remember how prone we all are to forget ourselves in prosperity, and how important it is to let afflictions work the end for which they are designed by God, namely, to recall us to a sense of our dependence upon him, and to oblige us to have recourse to him : when we do so, he will hear our cry ; he will change sorrow into joy, and with everlasting kindness will he have mercy upon us.

The Psalm may be considered in another light, as spoken in the person of the Messiah, and to be a thanksgiving for his deliverance from the grave, and for his exaltation from a state of humiliation ; in this sense also, we have an interest in it as future partakers in Christ's resurrection.

1. I will magnify thee, O Lord, for thou hast set me up, and not made my foes to triumph over me.

2. O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.

3. Thou, Lord, hast brought my soul out of hell; thou hast kept my life from them that go down to the pit.¹

4. Sing praises unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks unto him for a remembrance² of his holiness.

5. For his wrath endureth but the twinkling of an eye, and in his pleasure is life; heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

6. And in my prosperity, I said,³ I shall never be removed; thou, Lord, of thy goodness hast made my hill so strong.

7. Thou didst turn thy face from me, and I was troubled.

8. Then cried I unto thee, O Lord, and gat me to my Lord right humbly.

9. What profit is there in my blood when I go down to the pit?

10. Shall the dust give thanks unto thee, or shall it declare thy truth?

11. Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me; Lord, be thou my helper.

12. Thou hast turned my heaviness into joy; thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.

13. Therefore, shall every good man sing of thy praise without ceasing: O my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

(¹) The meaning may be, "Thou hast brought up my frame from the grave, thou hast quickened me from among them that go down to the pit."

(²) Or at the remembrance.

(³) Or, "And I said, in my prosperity, I shall never." &c.

O Lord our God, whose mercy is infinite, whose wrath endureth but the twinkling of an eye, and who even in that short time of thy wrath rememberest mercy, we cry unto thee and address ourselves right humbly. O Lord, we are poor and helpless sinners in our best estate; leave us not comfortless, and when we are brought low by sickness or disease, do thou make all our bed in our sickness, lift our drooping spirits, and teach us to resign ourselves wholly to thy blessed will. Sanctify all thy dispensations to the advantage of our immortal souls, to the quickening of our repentance, and to the strengthening of our faith; that our consciences being lightened from the burden of sin, we may look forward with joy and comfort to thy pardoning mercies through Christ Jesus, and when the time of our departure comes, we may be presented as evidences of thy sovereign grace before the great assembly of saints and angels in thy kingdom in heaven. Grant this, O merciful Father, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

JANUARY.

MAY.

SEPTEMBER.



PSALM XXXI.

God is faithful and just to save those who in time of trouble look up to him alone for help. The Christian, like his blessed Master, is besieged by many and powerful enemies; he must expect troubles, vexation, and afflictions in this life; but under such trials the soul is made cheerful by reflecting that God knoweth our adversities, that our time is in his hands, and that he will in due season send us that deliverance which to him seems most meet for us. Meanwhile, let us have recourse to the prayer of faith; let us seek, and we shall find support, let us knock, and the doors of everlasting mercy will be opened unto us. Peace of conscience, the comforts of the Spirit, and the hope of future glory, will dispel our gloom, and our heart will be established by trust in the Lord.

1. In thee, O Lord, have I put my trust; let me never be put to confusion; deliver me in thy righteousness.

2. Bow down thine ear to me; make haste to deliver me.

3. And be thou my strong rock and house of defence, that thou mayest save me.

4. For thou art my strong rock and my castle; be thou also my guide, and lead me, for thy Name's sake.¹

5. Draw me out of the net that they have laid privily for me, for thou art my strength.

6. Into thy hands I commend my spirit, for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth.²

7. I have hated them that regard lying vanities; ³ but I trust in the Lord.

8. I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy; for thou hast considered my trouble, and hast known my soul in adversities.

9. Thou hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy, but hast set my feet in a large room.

10. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble, and mine eye is consumed for very heaviness; yea, my soul and my body.

11. For my life is waxen old with heaviness, and my years with mourning.

12. My strength faileth me because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.

13. I became a reproof among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours; and they of mine acquaintance were afraid of me; and they, that did see me without, conveyed themselves from me.

14. I am clean forgotten, as a dead man out of mind; I am become like a broken vessel.⁴

15. For I have heard the blasphemy of the multitude, and fear is on every side, while they conspire

(¹) For the sake of that Name which implieth salvation.

(²) St Luke, xxiii. 46.

(³) Idolatry or atheism.

(⁴) Such was the case with Christ when laid in the sepulchre.

together against me, and take their counsel to take away my life.

16. But my hope hath been in thee, O Lord; I have said, Thou art my God.

17. My time is in thy hand; deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.

18. Show thy servant the light of thy countenance, and save me for thy mercies' sake.

19. Let me not be confounded, O Lord, for I have called upon thee: let the ungodly be put to confusion, and be put to silence in the grave.

20. Let the lying lips be put to silence, which cruelly, disdainfully, and despitefully speak against the righteous.

21. O how plentiful is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, and that thou hast prepared for them that put their trust in thee, even before the sons of men.

22. Thou shalt hide them privily by thine own presence from the provoking of all men: thou shalt keep them secretly in thy tabernacle from the strife of tongues.

23. Thanks be to the Lord, for he hath shewed me marvellous great kindness in a strong city.

24. For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless, thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.

25. O love the Lord, all ye his saints; for the Lord preserveth them that are faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

26. Be strong, and he shall establish your heart, all ye that put your trust in the Lord.

O Lord, in whom we have trusted, the rock of our might, and our merciful God, be present with us, we beseech thee, in all dangers and adversities, both spiritual and temporal : let not the overflowings of ungodliness overwhelm us, nor let us sink under such calamities as may befall us. We know, O God, that thou art good and gracious, and of tender mercy towards all who call upon thee ; we therefore pray, that in all the changes and chances of this mortal life, we may be kept by thy power, through faith unto salvation : we pray, that when thy chastisements fall upon us, we may have grace to call our ways to remembrance, to search out our spirits, to try our very hearts and reins, that we may turn to thee in all our sadness of soul, fervently imploring thy pardon and forgiveness for the time past, and earnestly seeking for more abundant supplies of grace to renovate our nature, and to prepare us for that great day when the secrets of all hearts shall be known ; and this we humbly beg through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

JANUARY.

MAY.

SEPTEMBER.



PSALM XXXII.

St John assures us, that if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Encouraged by this assurance, as well as by the declarations which David makes in this Psalm, let us draw nigh unto God, whensoever those inward monitors of conscience and remorse warn us that we have need of pardon and consolation : let us not suffer the moral wound made by sin to become a putrifying sore, but seek the Lord while haply he may be found. Let us not act like untameable animals who must be restrained by force, but like rational creatures whose trust is in the Lord their God : so will a merciful God inform us and guide us in the way wherein we should go, and we shall enjoy the blessedness which results from a sense of reconciliation with our offended Maker.

1. Blessed is he whose unrighteousness is forgiven, and whose sin is covered.

2. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth no sin, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

3. For while I held my tongue, my bones consumed away through my daily complaining.¹

4. For thy hand is heavy upon me day and night,
and my moisture is like the drought in summer.

5. I will acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine unrighteousness have I not hid.

6. I said, I will confess my sins unto the Lord ;
and so thou forgavest the wickedness of my sin.

7. For this shall every one that is godly make his prayer unto thee, in a time when thou mayest be found :² surely, in the floods of great waters, they shall not come nigh him.

8. Thou art a place to hide me in: thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.

9. ³I will inform thee, and teach thee in the way wherein thou shalt go, and I will guide thee with mine eye.

10. ⁴Be ye not like to horse and mule, which have no understanding, whose mouths must be held with bit and bridle lest they fall upon thee.

11. Great plagues remain for the ungodly; but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord, mercy embraceth him on every side.

12. Be glad, O ye righteous, and rejoice in the Lord; and be joyful all ye that are true of heart.

(1) Such is the misery of the attempt to smother the sense of guilt within ourselves, overwhelming fear of death, and terror of judgment.

(2) The Redeemer promises the direction

(2) True penitents will be led to make use of the Spirit in the way of righteousness.

their prayer unto God in an acceptable time, and shall thus be preserved from an

(4) Let humble submission render severity of discipline unnecessary.

O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth, but yet whose property is always to have mercy and to forgive, Have mercy, gracious God, upon us, whose sins are great and many : impute not unto us the offences which we have multiplied against thee, for we have erred and strayed from thy ways. We have been headstrong in our passions, sensual in our affections, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. O cleanse us from our secret as well as from our glaring sins, and preserve us from the overwhelming sorrows that await the unrighteous and impenitent sinner. Thy mercy reacheth unto the heavens, and thy faithfulness unto the clouds ; O let it then embrace us on every side ; let not thy hand be heavy upon us, but guide us and teach us in the way wherein we should go ; so shall we be glad and rejoice in thy holy comfort, O merciful Saviour and Redeemer, who, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, liveth and reigneth, now and for evermore. Amen.

JANUARY. }
MAY. }
SEPTEMBER. }

PSALM XXXIII.

It is a duty highly reasonable, and highly delightful to good men, to praise the Lord for his goodness as manifested in the works of creation, and for his superintending and overruling providence. If the Israelites were highly favoured as the people whom God hath chosen for his inheritance, so we, who are members of Christ's Church, and thereby made children of God, have a still more especial reason to be thankful. St Paul tells us to rejoice in the Lord always, and David, to the same instruction adds, "for it becometh well the just to be thankful." The certainty that God has a perfect knowledge of all that passes in the world, of all the thoughts as well as actions of men, should engage us to fear him, and to trust in his mercy.

1. Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, for it becometh well the just to be thankful.

2. Praise the Lord with harp; sing praises unto him with the lute and instrument of ten strings.¹

⁽¹⁾ There is no instrument like the rational soul, no melody like that of well tuned affections.

3. Sing unto the Lord a new song; sing praises lustily unto him with a good courage.

4. For the word of the Lord is true, and all his works are faithful.

5. He loveth righteousness and judgment; the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

6. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

7. He gathereth the waters of the sea together, as it were upon an heap, and layeth up the deep as in a treasure house.

8. Let all the earth fear the Lord; stand in awe of him all ye that dwell in the world.

9. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.

10. The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought, and maketh the devices of the people to be of none effect, and casteth out the counsels of princes.

11. The counsel of the Lord shall endure for ever, and the thoughts of his heart from generation to generation.

12. Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord Jehovah, and blessed are the folk that he hath chosen to him to be his inheritance.

13. The Lord looked down from heaven, and beheld all the children of men from the habitation of his dwelling; he considereth all them that dwell on the earth.²

14. He fashioneth all the hearts of them, and understandeth all their works.

(²) The ever-waking eye of Providence, without despondency, and hope in him which looketh on all, looketh with favour without presumption. and loving-kindness on such as fear God

15. There is no king that can be saved by the multitude of an host ; neither is any mighty man delivered by much strength.

16. A horse is counted but a vain thing to save a man ; neither shall he deliver any man by his great strength.

17. Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, and upon them that put their trust in his mercy ;

18. To deliver their soul from death, and to feed them in the time of dearth.

19. Our soul hath patiently tarried for the Lord, for he is our help and our shield.³

20. For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have hoped in his holy Name.

21. Let thy merciful kindness, O Lord, be upon us, like as we do put our trust in thee.

O Lord our God, who fillest heaven and earth with thy goodness, we present ourselves before the throne of thy majesty and glory, acknowledging ourselves dependent upon thee for all we have, and all we hope for ; for the many blessings and comforts of this life, and for the hopes and assurance of a better. Accept, we humbly beseech thee, of this tribute of our praise and adoration ; and pardon, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our great unworthiness of what

⁽³⁾ The righteous are here introduced, in faith and patience, waiting for the coming of their Lord and Saviour, declaring their fixed resolution to persevere

thou hast done for us. Give us, we pray thee, for the future such a sense of thy infinite loving-kindness towards us as may engage us more and more to love and obey thee, and make us afraid of any thing which may be displeasing in thy sight. O Lord, vouchsafe to defend us against the snares of the devil, and the corrupt lusts and passions of our unsubdued nature: give us a true sense of the inestimable value of our souls, and make it the chief care and concern of our lives to work out our salvation with care and diligence, that when this short life is ended, we may be numbered with thine elect, and be made partakers of everlasting glory, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

JANUARY.

MAY.

SEPTEMBER.

} PSALM XXXIV.

The frequent prosperity of the wicked, and the troubles of the righteous, in this world, strike powerfully upon the sense, and are, for that reason, too apt to efface from our minds the notices given us by faith of that future inversion of circumstances which is to take

place after death. To renew, therefore, the impression of such an interesting truth, the redemption of the afflicted, who are of an humble spirit, is often insisted on in the course of this Psalm. "Thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him *also* that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Let us, then, always give thanks unto the Lord, whether in sickness or in health, in prosperity or in adversity.

1. I will alway give thanks unto the Lord ; his praise shall ever be in my mouth.

2. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord ; the humble shall hear thereof and be glad.

3. O praise the Lord with me, and let us magnify his Name together.

4. I sought the Lord, and he heard me ; yea, he delivered me out of all my fear.

5. They had an eye unto him, and were lightened ;¹ and their faces were not ashamed.

6. Lo ! the poor crieth, and the Lord heareth him, yea, and saveth him out of all his troubles.

7. The angel of the Lord tarrieth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.²

8. O taste and see how gracious the Lord is ; blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

(1) Look towards Him with the eye of faith, and you shall be enlightened.

(2) Let the consideration of these invisible guardians restrain us from evil and incite us to good.

9. O fear the Lord, ye that are his saints ; for they that fear him lack nothing.³

10. The lions do lack and suffer hunger ; but they who seek the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good.⁴

11. Come, ye children, and hearken unto me ; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

12. What man is he that lusteth to live, and would fain see good days ?

13. Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips, that they speak no guile.

14. Eschew evil and do good ; seek peace and ensue it.

15. The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers.

16. The countenance of the Lord is against them that do evil, to root out the remembrance of them from the earth.

17. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth them, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.⁵

18. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart, and will save such as be of an humble spirit.

19. Great are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of all.

20. He keepeth all his bones, so that not one of them is broken.

21. But misfortune shall slay the ungodly, and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.⁶

⁽³⁾ Lack nothing of what can be called "true riches."

⁽⁴⁾ Tyrants and oppressors, who are as lions in a forest, are often reduced to want that which they have ravished from others.

⁽⁵⁾ David was afflicted, and Christ was afflicted ; but the afflictions of the righteous end in victory and glory.

⁽⁶⁾ Let us consider the present desolation of the once highly-favoured nation for their enmity against the King of Righteousness.

22. The Lord delivereth the souls of his servants, and all they that put their trust in him shall not be destitute.

O most merciful and gracious Lord God, whose eyes are over the righteous, and whose ears are open unto their prayers, Give us, we beseech thee, an humble heart and a contrite spirit — a fear of thy name — a watchfulness over our tongues — a care of our actions — and a zeal for thy service, that we may depart from evil and do good ; thus seeking the peace of God which passeth understanding. Endue us, O God, with that meekness of spirit, that may enable us to live peaceably with all men, avoiding contentions and strife, and all uncharitableness ; and thus prepare us, O God, for those heavenly joys, which are at thy right hand for evermore ; to which we pray thee to exalt us, for the sake, and through the merits, of Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

JANUARY. }

MAY. }

SEPTEMBER. }

PSALM XXXV.

Throughout this Psalm, the Psalmist speaks in the person of the Messiah, who, in the days of his humiliation, prays to his heavenly Father for support, and utters, not by way of imprecation, but as prophecy, many warnings of the fate of his adversaries, of which, had they been mindful, they might have availed themselves. Let us consider these warnings as applying to the enemies of Christ's church and of Christ's name, and so take heed lest we provoke the severity of God's wrath against us. Let us be amongst those who rejoice at the salvation wrought out for us, and who favour, by promoting, the knowledge of Christ's righteousness, as the justifying means whereby sinners may attain unto life everlasting.

1. 'Plead thou my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me, and fight thou against them that fight against me.

2. Lay hand upon the shield and buckler, and stand up to help me.

⁽¹⁾ This prayer may be adopted by the Church under persecution, or by the Christian under temptation.

3. Bring forth the spear, and stop the way against them that persecute me ; say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.

4. Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul ; let them be turned back and brought to confusion that imagine mischief for me.

5. Let them be as the dust before the wind, and the angel of the Lord scattering them.

6. Let their way be dark and slippery,² and let the angel of the Lord persecute them.

7. For they have privily laid their net to destroy me without a cause ; yea, even without a cause, have they made a pit for my soul.

8. Let a sudden destruction come upon him unawares, and his net, that he hath laid privily, catch himself, that he may fall into his own mischief.³

9. And, my soul, be joyful in the Lord ; it shall rejoice in his salvation.

10. All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee, who deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him ; yea, the poor, and him that is in misery, from him that spoileth him.

11. False witnesses did rise up ; they laid to my charge things that I knew not.

12. They rewarded me evil for good, to the great discomfort of my soul.

13. Nevertheless, when they were sick, I put on sackcloth, and humbled my soul with fasting ; and my prayer shall turn into mine own bosom.⁴

(²) A traveller, benighted on a bad road, is an expressive emblem of a sinner walking in the slippery paths of temptation.

the Romans should take away their place and nation, had their place and nation taken away by those Romans.

(⁴) Sin is the sickness of a Christian :

(³) The Jews, who crucified Jesus lest by the atonement of Christ we are healed.

14. I behaved myself as though it had been my friend or my brother ; I went heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.

15. But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together ; yea, the very abjects came together against me unawares, making mouths at me, and ceased not.⁵

16. With the flatterers were busy mockers, who gnashed upon me with their teeth.

17. Lord, how long wilt thou look upon this : O deliver my soul from the calamities which they bring on me, and my darling from the lions.

18. So will I give thee thanks in the great congregation ; I will praise thee among much people.⁶

19. Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me ; neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.

20. And why ? their communing is not for peace ; but they imagine deceitful words against them that are quiet in the land.

21. They gaped upon me with their mouths, and said, Fie on thee, fie on thee, we saw it with our eyes.

22. This thou hast seen, O Lord : hold not thy tongue, then ; go not far from me, O Lord.

23. Awake, and stand up to judge my quarrel ; avenge thou my cause, my God and my Lord.

24. Judge me, O Lord my God, according to thy righteousness, and let them not triumph over me.

25. Let them not say in their hearts, There, there,

(⁵) When the blessed Jesus was suffering for the sins of men, he was insulted by those for whose sins he suffered.

(⁶) Our Lord predicteth the praise and glory that should accrue to God in the Church after his resurrection, by the preaching of the Apostles.

so would we have it ; neither let them say, We have devoured him.

26. Let them be put to confusion and shame together, that rejoice at my trouble ; let them be clothed with rebuke and dishonour, that boast themselves against me.

27. Let them be glad and rejoice, that favour my righteous dealing ;⁷ yea, let them say alway, Blessed be the Lord, who hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.

28. And as for my tongue, it shall be talking of thy righteousness, and of thy praise all the day long.

O God, whose blessed Son endured the contradiction of sinners, that he might make us thy children, and heirs of everlasting glory ; endue our hearts, we beseech thee, with profound humility and love, in contemplating this his inestimable mercy towards mankind. Take us out of the slippery paths of sin and vice, and lead us, by thy Holy Spirit, in the strait and narrow way that leadeth to eternal life. Make us to rejoice in the salvation thou hast wrought for us, and to take delight in proclaiming it among those who have not known thy name. And let thy praises be ever in our mouth, whilst our hearts being subdued unto righteousness, we may bring forth the fruits

⁽⁷⁾ Let them sing and rejoice that take delight in my righteousness or justification.

thereof, in all holy living, and may daily be more and more conformed to thy blessed Son ; to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be honour, glory, and praise, now and for evermore. Amen.

JANUARY.

MAY.

SEPTEMBER.

} PSALM XXXVI.

This Psalm may be divided into two parts. In the first four verses, the prophet declares his conviction, that all wickedness proceedeth from the absence of the fear of God, in him who commits it—that fear being a principle which, if predominant in the man, will restrain him from transgression ; he declares the exceeding deceitfulness of sin, which renders us blind to our own wickedness. In the second part, the Psalmist sets forth the boundless extent of God's mercy, unto such as love and fear him ; and in the last verse he prophesies the final overthrow of the wicked.

PART FIRST.

1. My heart sheweth me the wickedness of the ungodly, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.

2. For he flattereth himself in his own sight, until his abominable sin be found out.

3. The words of his mouth are unrighteous, and full of deceit; he hath left off to behave himself wisely, and to do good.

4. He imagineth mischief upon his bed, and hath set himself in no good way: neither doth he abhor any thing that is evil.

PART SECOND.

5. Thy mercy, O Lord, reacheth unto the heavens, and thy faithfulness unto the clouds.

6. Thy righteousness¹ standeth like the strong mountains: thy judgments are like the great deep.

7. Thou, Lord, shalt save both man and beast: how excellent is thy mercy, O God; and the children of men shall put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

8. They shall be satisfied with the plenteousness of thy house; and thou shalt give them drink of thy pleasures as out of the river.²

9. For with thee is the well of life, and in thy light shall we see light.

10. O continue forth thy loving-kindness unto them that know thee, and thy righteousness³ unto them that are true of heart.

(1) Or justice.

(2) Or justification.

(3) In heaven alone can the thirst of an immortal soul be satisfied.

11. O let not the foot of pride come against me ;⁴ and let not the hand of the ungodly cast me down.

12. There are they fallen, all that work wickedness ; they are cast down, and shall not be able to stand.

O God, whose mercy reacheth unto the heavens, and thy righteousness unto the clouds, teach us to abhor every thing that is evil ; and to set ourselves with diligence and sincerity in every good way. Let our morning and evening thoughts be devoted to thy service, and let the love and fear of thy holy Name be so inwardly grafted on our hearts, that thou mayest continue forth thy loving-kindness towards us all the days of our life, and that we may at last be satisfied with the plenteousness of thy house, and may drink of the rivers of pleasure which are at thy right hand for evermore, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, who knowest our necessities before we ask, and our ignorance in asking, we beseech thee to have compassion on our infirmities ; and those things which, for our unworthiness, we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask, vouchsafe to give us, for the worthiness of thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

⁽⁴⁾ Either from within, or from without.

JANUARY. }
MAY. }
SEPTEMBER. }

PSALM XXXVII.

Man is too short-sighted in spiritual matters to be able to judge rightly of the ways of Providence. We must not draw rash conclusions from seeing wickedness prevalent, and wicked men triumphant, in this world. Faith and patience assure us that there is a God that judgeth the earth, and that there is a reward laid up for the righteous; and although the good man may have many troubles, which are to him as trials, purifying his faith and his love, yet the Lord will support him. He will order his goings, and make his way acceptable unto himself.

1. Fret not thyself because of the ungodly, neither be thou envious against the evil-doers;

2. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and be withered even as the green herb.

3. Put thou thy trust in the Lord, and be doing good; dwell¹ in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

⁽¹⁾ So long as thou dwellest.

4. Delight thou in the Lord, and he shall give thee thy heart's desire.

5. Commit thy way unto the Lord, and put thy trust in him, and he shall bring it to pass.

6. He shall make thy righteousness as clear as the light ; and thy just dealing as the noon day.

7. Hold thee still in the Lord, and abide patiently upon him ; but grieve not thyself at him whose way doth prosper, against the man that doeth after evil counsels.

8. Leave off from wrath, and let go displeasure : fret not thyself, else shalt thou be moved to do evil.

9. Wicked doers shall be rooted out ; and they that patiently abide the Lord, those shall inherit the land.

10. Yet a little while, and the ungodly shall be clean gone : thou shalt look after his place, and he shall be away.

11. But the meek-spirited shall possess the earth, and shall be refreshed in the multitude of peace.

12. The ungodly seeketh counsel against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.²

13. The Lord shall laugh him to scorn ; for he hath seen that his day is coming.

14. The ungodly have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow ; to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as are of a right conversation.

15. Their sword shall go through their own heart ; and their bow shall be broken.

16. A small thing that the righteous hath, is better than great riches of the ungodly.

² Or layeth plots

17. For the arms of the ungodly shall be broken ; and the Lord upholdeth the righteous.

18. The Lord knoweth the days of the godly, and their inheritance shall endure for ever.

19. They shall not be confounded in the perilous time ; and in the days of death they shall have enough.

20. As for the ungodly, they shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall consume as the fat of lambs : yea, even as the smoke shall they consume away.

21. The ungodly borroweth, and payeth not again ; but the righteous is merciful and liberal.

22. Such as are blessed of God shall possess the land ; and they that are cursed of him shall be rooted out.

23. The Lord ordereth a good man's going, and maketh his way acceptable to himself.

24. Though he fall he shall not be cast away ; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.

25. I have been young, and now am old ; and yet saw I never the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.

26. The righteous is ever merciful, and lendeth ; and his seed is blessed.

27. Flee from evil, and do the thing that is good, and dwell for evermore.

28. For the Lord loveth the thing that is right ; he forsaketh not his that be godly, but they are preserved for ever.

29. The unrighteous shall be punished ; as for the seed of the ungodly, it shall be rooted out.

30. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.

31. The mouth of the righteous is exercised in wisdom, and his tongue will be talking of judgment.

32. The law of his God is in his heart, and his goings shall not slide.

33. The ungodly seeth the righteous, and seeketh occasion to slay him.

34. The Lord will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged.

35. Hope thou in the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall promote thee, that thou shalt possess the land ; when the ungodly shall perish, thou shalt see it.

36. I myself have seen the ungodly in great power, and flourishing like a green bay tree.

37. I went by, and, lo ! he was gone ; I sought him, but his place could no where be found.

38. Keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right, for that shall bring a man peace at the last.

39. As for the transgressors, they shall perish together ; and the end of the ungodly is, they shall be rooted out at the last.

40. But the salvation of the righteous cometh of the Lord, who is also their strength in the time of trouble.

41. And the Lord shall stand by them and save them : he shall deliver them from the ungodly, and shall save them, because they put their trust in him.

O Almighty God, who never forsakest the godly, but preservest them for ever, let thy

law be in our hearts, grounded and fixed, that we may keep innocency, and take heed to the thing that is right : order our goings, and make our way acceptable to thyself, that we, delighting in thee alone, committing our ways wholly to thy providence, and putting our trust in thy mercies, may not be confounded in the perilous time, but may be refreshed in the multitude of peace ; and when, through the infirmities of our nature, we fall, yet cast us not away, O God, in thy displeasure, but uphold us by thy Spirit, for thou art our strength. Stand by us, then, O God, and save us ; let not Satan have dominion over us, but bring us at the last day to thy heavenly rest, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

JANUARY. }
 MAY. }
 SEPTEMBER. } PSALM XXXVIII.

By comparing this Psalm with several passages in the Gospels, we shall perceive how exactly the sufferings of the blessed Jesus in his human nature are here shadowed forth to us sinners, for whose sake our Saviour underwent these sufferings. A meditation on this

Psalm is highly necessary. No pain is so sharp, no misery so great, as that which comes from a deep sense of sin ; a wounded spirit who can bear ? But then, such wounds become useful if they produce contrition of soul—if they lead us to humble ourselves in the sight of God ; for if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive them. He is the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort ; and when earthly friends stand aloof, he supports, by his Holy Spirit, those who fly to him for succour.

1. Put me not to rebuke, O Lord, in thine anger ; neither chasten me in thy heavy displeasure.¹

2. For thine arrows stick fast in me ; and thy hand presseth me sore.

3. There is no health in my flesh, because of thy displeasure ; neither is there any rest in my bones, by reason of my sin.²

4. For my wickednesses are gone over my head ; and are like a sore burden, too heavy for me to bear.

5. My wounds stink, and are corrupt through my foolishness.³

6. I am brought into so great trouble and misery, that I go mourning all the day long.

7. For my loins are filled with a sore disease ; and there is no whole part in my body.

(1) The petition here preferred is, that God would not condemn as a judge, but chasten as a father.

(2) The terms health and sickness refer here to the soul.

(3) Sin is the wound of the soul, which must be washed with the tears of repentance, and healed by the blood of Christ.

8. I am feeble and sore smitten ; I have roared for the very disquietness of my heart.

9. Lord, thou knowest all my desire, and my groaning is not hid from thee.⁴

10. My heart panteth, my strength hath failed me, and the sight of mine eyes is gone from me.

11. My lovers and my neighbours did stand looking upon my trouble ; and my kinsmen stood afar off.⁵

12. They also that sought after my life, laid snares for me ; and they that went about to do me evil, talked of wickedness, and imagined deceit all the day long.⁶

13. As for me, I was like a deaf man, and heard not ; and as one that is dumb, who doth not open his mouth.

14. I became even as a man that heareth not ; and in whose mouth are no reproofs.

15. For in thee, O Lord, have I put my trust : thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God.

16. I have required that they, even mine enemies, should not triumph over me ; for when my foot slipped they rejoiced greatly against me.

17. For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me.

18. For I will confess my wickedness, and be sorry for my sin.

19. But mine enemies live, and are mighty ; and they that hate me wrongfully, are many in number.

⁽⁴⁾ The desires and groans of the penitent are known to God.

⁽⁵⁾ A body afflicted with a noisome distemper, and a soul humiliated on

account of sin, find but few earthly friends.

⁽⁶⁾ For the justness of the application of these verses to our Saviour, see Matt. xxvi. 56, and Luke, xxiii. 49.

20. They also that reward evil for good are against me, because I follow the thing that good is.

21. Forsake me not, O Lord my God ; be not thou far from me.

22. Hasten thee to help me, O Lord God of my salvation.

O Lord, who knowest all our desires, and from whom our sorrows are not hid, we confess before thee the many sins and wickednesses which we, from time to time, most grievously have committed, by thought, word, and deed, against thy Divine Majesty. Our transgressions are a sore burden, too heavy for us to bear ; but our trust is in thy merits, O blessed Jesus. Put us not to rebuke, O Lord, at the awful day of judgment. Let the mantle of thy righteousness be cast over us, and make us glad with the joy of thy countenance ; so shall we sing eternal halleluiahs to thy praise, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

JANUARY.
MAY.
—



PSALM XXXIX.

The uncertain duration of human life, and the unsatisfactory nature of all earthly pursuits, appear to have been forcibly brought to the Psalmist's mind, when he says, "my heart was hot within me." Whether it were grief, or sickness, or from whatever cause it was that these vivid impressions of the transitory nature of this life arose, it is no matter for us to inquire : suffice it that we, being always sensible of the shortness of our days, pray to Almighty God, that whatever of spiritual life within us hath been decayed by the fraud and malice of the devil, or by our own carnal will and frailty, may be renewed before we go hence and be no more seen.

1. I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not in my tongue.

2. I will keep my mouth as it were with a bridle, while the ungodly is in my sight.

3. I held my tongue, and spake nothing ; I kept silence, yea even from good words, but it was pain and grief to me.¹

⁽¹⁾ There is a time to keep silence, because there are men who will not hear,—this causes grief to a pious heart.

4. My heart was hot within me, and while I was thus musing the fire kindled ; and at the last I spake with my tongue.

5. Lord, let me know mine end, and the number of my days, that I may be certified how long I have to live.

6. Behold, thou hast made my days as it were a span long ; and mine age is even as nothing in respect of thee ; and verily every man living is altogether vanity.²

7. For man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain ; he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them.

8. And now, Lord, what is my hope ? Truly my hope is even in thee.

9. Deliver me from all mine offences, and make me not a rebuke unto the foolish.

10. I became dumb, and opened not my mouth, for it was thy doing.

11. Take thy plague away from me ; I am even consumed by the means of thy heavy hand.

12. When thou with rebukes dost chasten man for sin, thou makest his beauty to consume away, like as it were a moth fretting a garment ; every man, therefore, is but vanity.³

13. Hear my prayer, O Lord, and with thine ears consider my calling : hold not thy peace at my tears ;

(²) The mortal state of man is compounded of light and darkness ; seeming to be something, when really it is nothing ; always altering—and ending on a sudden ; sure to continue no longer than while the sun is above the horizon, but

liable to vanish at the interposition of a cloud.

(³) The body of man is as a garment to the soul, which wears away either by lingering disease, or by the slow and silent devastations of time.

14. For I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.

15. O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength, before I go hence, and be no more seen.

O eternal God, who art without beginning or end of days ; thou hast given us a short portion of time in the generations of this world : our condition here is vain, unsatisfying, and full of disquiet ; and we have no hope but in thee, O Lord. O teach us to number our days, to remember, and to know our end, that so we may never sin against thee ; and grant that we may live as always dying, mortifying our souls and bodies, and bridling our tongues and affections : and that, instead of heaping up riches on earth, we may have our treasure in heaven, laid up in store against the time to come ; that our strength being regained, and our peace with God sealed, when we go hence and are no more seen, we may dwell in those mansions prepared for the blessed children of God, through the merits and sufferings of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

FEBRUARY.	}	PSALM XL.
JUNE.		
OCTOBER.		

The circumstance of three verses of this Psalm being quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in reference to the inadequacy of animal sacrifices, and the necessity for a more perfect atonement for sin, proves that the Psalmist speaks prophetically in the person of the Messiah ; and we may regard the whole Psalm as referring either to Christ or the Church ; to the afflictions and troubles which Christ endured, or to those which the Church has to endure ; also to the wondrous works which God, in his mercy towards mankind, hath wrought for the redemption of our souls. Our sins were those which were laid upon the Saviour when he exclaims, in the words of the prophet, “they are more numerous than the hairs of my head.” O let us then value the mercy of our dear Redeemer ; he hath saved us from the horrible pit ; he hath set our feet upon a rock, and ordered our goings, if so be that we believe and repent, and are obedient to his commands.

1. I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my calling.

2. He brought me also out of the horrible pit, out of the mire and clay, and set my feet upon the rock, and ordered my goings.¹

3. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even a thanksgiving unto our God.

4. Many shall see it, and fear, and shall put their trust in the Lord.

5. Blessed is the man that hath set his hope in the Lord, and turned not unto the proud, and to such as go about with lies.

6. O Lord my God, great are the wondrous works which thou hast done; like as be also thy thoughts which are to us-ward; they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee.²

7. If I should declare them, and speak of them, they should be more than I am able to express.

8. Sacrifice and meat-offering thou wouldest not, but mine ears hast thou opened.³

9. Burnt-offerings and sacrifice for sin hast thou not required: then said I, lo! I come.

10. In the volume of the book it is written of me, that I should fulfil thy will, O my God: I am content to do it; yea, thy law is within my heart.

11. I have declared thy righteousness in the great congregation; lo, I will not refrain my lips, O Lord, and that thou knowest.

12. I have not hid thy righteousness within my

⁽¹⁾ He delivers us from the grave, from sanctification, of preservation here below, the mire of sin, and the clay of misery. and of future glorification.

⁽²⁾ Works of creation, redemption, and

⁽³⁾ Thou hast made me obedient.

heart : my talk hath been of thy truth and of thy salvation.

13. I have not kept back thy loving mercy and truth from the great congregation.

14. Withdraw not thou thy mercy from me, O Lord : let thy loving-kindness and thy truth always preserve me.

15. For innumerable troubles are come about me ; my sins have taken such hold upon me that I am not able to look up : yea, they are more in number than the hairs of my head, and my heart hath failed me.

16. O Lord, let it be thy pleasure to deliver me ; make haste, O Lord, to help me.

17. Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it ; let them be driven backward, and put to rebuke that wish me evil.⁴

18. Let them be desolate and rewarded with shame, that say unto me, Fie upon thee, fie upon thee.

19. Let all those that seek thee be joyful and glad in thee ; and let such as love thy salvation say alway, The Lord be praised.

20. As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord careth for me.⁵

21. Thou art my helper and redeemer ; make no long tarrying, O my God.

⁽⁴⁾ The 17th, 18th, and 19th verses are prophetical, and may apply to the enemies of Christ's Church.

⁽⁵⁾ We are to suppose the Messiah as still suffering in his mystical body, the Church.

O Lord our God, whose works are wondrous, and whose thoughts which are to us-ward are full of mercy ; we adore and magnify thy glorious Name, thine infinite perfections, and thy merciful loving-kindness towards the fallen sons of Adam : Thou, O Lord, hast dealt most graciously with us ; thou hast borne our iniquities, which are more in number than the hairs of our head ; thou hast saved us from the pit of eternal misery, and hast placed our justification upon the Rock, Christ Jesus. Keep us, O God, we beseech thee, steadfast in thy faith and fear ; teach us to cling to the hope that is set before us ; and do thou, O God, by thy Holy Spirit, so order our goings as to make our way acceptable to thyself. Let not our spiritual enemies have dominion over us, but when they assault us, be thou, O God, present with us ; make no long tarrying, O God, our Saviour, but let thy faithfulness and truth be our shield and buckler ; and grant, O God, that we may rejoice for evermore in thy holy comfort, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FEBRUARY.

JUNE.

OCTOBER.



PSALM XLI.

As the Lord hath had compassion upon us, he expects that we should have compassion upon our fellow-creatures : and to encourage us thereto, and to incite us to acts of kindness to the poor and needy, he hath declared, “Forasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it even unto me.” An exemption from sickness and sorrow is not promised to the children of God, but strength and comfort are given them from above to support and carry them through their afflictive trials in this world ; and in the world to come they shall, through the merits of Christ, be set before the face of God for ever. From the 5th verse to the end of the Psalm, the Psalmist speaks in the person of the Messiah : the 9th verse contains the Scripture which our blessed Saviour applied to Judas.

1. Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy : the Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble.

2. The Lord preserve him, and keep him alive,

that he may be blessed upon earth ; and deliver not thou him into the will of his enemies.

3. The Lord comfort him when he lieth sick upon his bed : make thou all his bed in his sickness.

4. I said, Lord, be merciful unto me ; heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.

5. Mine enemies¹ speak evil of me : when shall he die, and his name perish ?

6. And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity, and his heart conceiveth falsehood within himself ; and when he cometh forth he telleth it.

7. All mine enemies whisper together against me ; even against me do they imagine this evil.

8. Let the sentence of guiltiness proceed against him ; and now that he lieth, let him rise up no more.

9. Yea, even mine own familiar friend, whom I trusted, who did also eat of my bread, hath laid great wait for me.²

10. But be thou merciful unto me, O Lord ; raise thou me up again, and I shall reward them.³

11. By this I know that thou favourest me, that mine enemy doth not triumph against me.

12. And when I am in my health thou upholdest me, and shalt set me before thy face for ever.

13. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, world without end. Amen.

⁽¹⁾ Mine enemies,—that is, the enemies of Christ and of his Church, saying, When shall, &c. can do her no harm until her pretended friends have betrayed her.

⁽²⁾ This is prophetic of the destruction which, at the last day, shall fall upon the enemies of Christ's Church.

O blessed Jesus, Saviour of the world, be merciful unto us, and heal us, for we have sinned against thee, and are no more worthy to be called thy children. O make us to regard with compassion the necessities of the poor and needy, and give us grace and power to help and to relieve them, that we, being merciful, may receive mercy in that great day, when thou wilt take account of thy servants, and wilt reward every man according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be evil. Teach and enable us, O God, by integrity of heart, and a faithful life, to escape the stings of conscience, which drove the wretched Judas to swift destruction ; and whilst we maintain fidelity to our own familiar friends, let us, if we suffer wrongfully at the hands of others, take it patiently, after the example of the blessed Jesus ; to whom, with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

FEBRUARY. }
JUNE. } PSALMS XLII. & XLIII.
OCTOBER. }

The forty-third may be regarded as a continuation of the forty-second Psalm. The thirst which the hart experiences, when chased in sultry weather over dusty plains, is set before us as a representation of that ardent desire for the waters of eternal comfort, which the troubles of the world produce in the believer's soul. The suppliant, in these Psalms, probably represents the Church of the converted Jews under persecution in the time of antichrist, previous to the future restoration of the Jewish people, when the madness of the people, which is here prefigured by the raging of the sea, will produce anarchy and trouble: then, as in all times of severe calamity, faith will be to the soul as an anchor sure and steadfast, opening to our view a glorious morning, after that former things shall have passed away, and all things are made new.

PSALM XLII.

1. Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O God.

2. My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God : when shall I come to appear before the presence of God ?

3. My tears have been my meat day and night, while they daily say unto me, Where is now thy God ?

4. Now, when I think thereupon, I pour out my heart by myself ; for I went with the multitude, and brought them forth into the house of God,

5. In the voice of praise and thanksgiving, among such as keep holy day.

6. Why art thou so full of heaviness, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me ?

7. Put thy trust in God, for I will yet give him thanks for the help of his countenance.

8. My God, my soul is vexed within me, therefore will I remember thee concerning the land of Jordan, and the little hill of Hermon.

9. One deep calleth another, because of the noise of the water-pipes :¹ all thy waves and storms are gone over me.

10. The Lord hath granted his loving-kindness in the day time ; and in the night season did I sing of him, and made my prayer unto the God of my life.

11. I will say unto the God of my strength, Why hast thou forgotten me ? why go I thus heavily while the enemy oppresseth me ?

12. My bones are smitten asunder as with a sword, while mine enemies that trouble me cast me in the teeth,

13. Namely, while they say daily unto me. Where is now thy God ?

⁽¹⁾ Or water-spouts, which, descending from the clouds, cause great agitation on the face of the deep.

14. Why art thou so vexed, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me ?

15. O put thy trust in God, for I will yet thank him, which is the help of my countenance, and my God.

PSALM XLIII.

1. Give sentence with me, O God, and defend my cause against the ungodly people : O deliver me from the deceitful and wicked man.

2. For thou art the God of my strength, why hast thou put me from thee ; and why go I so heavily, while the enemy oppresses me ?¹

3. O send out thy light and thy truth, that they may lead me, and bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy dwelling.

4. And that I may go unto the altar of God, even unto the God of my joy and gladness ; and upon the harp will I give thanks unto thee, O God, my God.

5. Why art thou so heavy, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me ?

6. O put thy trust in God, for I will yet give him thanks, which is the help of my countenance, and my God.

O eternal and everlasting God, thou art the help of our countenance and our God ; for thee

⁽¹⁾ The chief desire of the Christian is the light of heavenly wisdom, shining in to be saved from sin and sorrow : to be the face of Jesus Christ. instructed in the way of righteousness, by

we long, and our hearts are vexed and disquieted within us when we feel not the comforts of thy Holy Spirit. O Lord, pity our infirmities, and increase more and more in us the desire of communion with thee in prayer, and in thy holy sacraments. Grant unto us fervour of spirit, constancy in devotion, delight and complacency in spiritual exercises ; that when our souls are pressed with temptations and sadnesses, we may remember thee, concerning the land of promise ; and be comforted and encouraged in our duties, by the expectation of those glories which thou hast laid up for us, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FEBRUARY. }
JUNE. } PSALM XLIV.
OCTOBER. }

This, like the foregoing Psalm, is probably the prayer of the Church in future times, when, under persecution, she may feel as if God's protection had, for a season, been withdrawn from her. She recalls, however, God's mercies of old, acknowledging that to the power of his might she had been indebted for victories over the heathen, and she prays that he would again

arise, and help, and deliver her, for his mercy's sake. There is a time when the triumphs of the adversary, and the afflictions of the Church, tempt men to think that the eye of Providence is closed: but the truth is, that God only giveth his people an opportunity of feeling their own insufficiency, and waiteth till, by fervent and importunate prayer, they solicit his help.

1. We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what thou hast done in their time of old ;¹

2. How thou hast driven out the heathen with thy hand, and planted them in: how thou hast destroyed the nations, and cast them out.

3. For they gat not the land in possession through their own sword; neither was it their own arm that helped them;

4. But thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance; because thou hadst a favour unto them.

5. Thou art my King, O God: send help unto Jacob.

6. Through thee will we overthrow our enemies, and in thy Name will we tread them under that rise up against us.

7. For I will not trust in my bow: it is not my sword that shall help me;

⁽¹⁾ The works wrought of old by the Church and people of God, whensoever arm of Jehovah, for the salvation of his afflicted, might have comfort and patience. people, are recorded, to the intent that the

8. But it is thou that savest us from our enemies, and putttest them to confusion that hate us.

9. We make our boast of God all day long, and will praise thy Name for ever.

10. But now thou art far off, and putttest us to confusion, and goest not forth with our armies.²

11. Thou makest us to turn our backs upon our enemies, so that they which hate us spoil our goods.

12. Thou letttest us be eaten up like sheep, and hast scattered us among the heathen.

13. Thou sellest thy people for nought, and takest no money for them.

14. Thou makest us to be rebuked of our neighbours; to be laughed to scorn, and had in derision of them that are round about us.

15. Thou makest us to be a by-word among the heathen, and that the people shake their heads at us.

16. My confusion is daily before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me;

17. For³ the voice of the slanderer and blasphemer, for the enemy and avenger.

18. And though all this be come upon us, yet do we not forget thee, nor behave ourselves frowardly in thy covenant.⁴

19. Our heart is not turned back, neither our steps gone out of thy way.

20. No, not when thou hast smitten us into the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.

21. If we have forgotten the Name of our God,

(²) It is certain that God is provoked by the sins of a Church to let loose the fury of an oppressor upon her.

(³) "For," on account of.

(⁴) These verses are not spoken by the whole Church, but by a faithful remnant. Happy the soul that can, in the hour of affliction, thus appeal with humble confidence to God.

and holden up our hands to any strange god, shall not God search it out? for he knoweth the very secrets of the heart.

22. For thy sake, also, are we killed all the day long, and are counted as sheep appointed to be slain.

23. Up, Lord, why sleepest thou? awake, and be not absent from us for ever.

24. Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our misery and trouble?

25. For our soul is brought low, even unto the dust; our belly cleaveth unto the ground.

26. Arise and help us, and deliver us, for thy mercies' sake.

O God, who art holy, and just, and merciful, protect, we beseech thee, thy Church from all her enemies; be thou to her a strong tower of defence, and if aught of defilement should at any time sully the purity of her doctrine, do thou, O God, purge it out, and make her the happy instrument of salvation to thy people. Make us not, we beseech thee, O God, a rebuke unto the foolish, but let the light of thy Gospel so shine forth in our lives and conversations that gainsayers may be confounded, and turned unto righteousness. Thou, O Lord, knowest the very thoughts of the heart; cleanse us, we beseech thee, from all our secret faults, graft within us the love of thy Name, increase in us

true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FEBRUARY. }

JUNE. }

OCTOBER. }

PSALM XLV.

The whole of this Psalm is highly figurative ; it is a mystic song, representing, under the figure of the marriage of a great king, the mystical union between Christ and his Church. It is prophetic of the glorious increase of the Church by the conversion of the Jews to the Christian faith, and the accession of all the Gentile nations. The marriage is celebrated after Messiah's victories over his enemies, composing the antichristian faction : the bride, who is also called the king's daughter, is the Church of the converted Jews, while her companions represent those of the ingrafted Gentiles. The connection between Christ and his Church embraces every relation and every affection ; the Church is, therefore, the daughter, the wife, the sister of Christ. Such farther explanations of the Psalm as seem necessary to the full understanding of it will be given in the form of explanatory observations.

1. My heart is inditing a good matter ; I speak of the things which I have made touching the King.

2. My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

3. Thou art fairer than the children of men ; full of grace are thy lips, because God hath blessed thee for ever.

4. Gird thee with thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou most Mighty, according to thy worship and renown.

5. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness, and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.

6. Thine arrows are very sharp, and the people shall be subdued unto thee, even in the midst among the King's enemies.

7. Thy seat, O God, endureth for ever ; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.

8. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity ; wherefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

1. My heart meditates on a goodly theme, the subject whereof I address unto Messiah the King.

2. My tongue denotes the readiness of my mind.

3. Thou, O Messiah, art adorned with the beauty of innocence and sanctity : the gracious doctrines of justification, pardon, and peace, flow from thy lips.

4, 5, & 6. Messiah's sword is the Word of God, more powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. His arrows are another emblem of the Word, pricking man's heart, or if need be, carrying terror to his soul. The conquests of Messiah are those over sin, or those of his arm over

such as persecute the Word. Compare the expression " full of grace are thy lips," with the confession of Christ's enemies, " never man spake as this man," and again, as recorded by St Luke, " and all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth."

7 & 8. The Psalmist here exhibits Messiah as seated on the throne of his mediatorial kingdom, when all things shall have been put under his feet, and the last enemy subdued. By the oil of gladness is meant a state of bliss and glory for all those whom Christ hath vouchsafed to call his.

9. All thy garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.

10. Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women ; upon thy right hand did stand the queen in a vesture of gold, wrought about with divers colours.

11. Hearken, O daughter, and consider, incline thine ear, forget also thine own people and thy father's house.

12. So shall the King have pleasure in thy beauty ; for he is thy Lord God, and worship thou him.

13. And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift ; even the rich among the people shall make their supplication before thee.

14. The King's daughter is all glorious within ; her clothing is of wrought gold.

15. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needle-work ; the virgins that be her fellows shall bear her company, and shall be brought unto thee.

9. The perfumed garments of the Messiah are typical of the virtues and graces of the Redeemer in his human character — of the consoling and cheering effects of the ministration of the Word, and of the internal comforts of the Holy Spirit.

10, 11, & 12. Kings' daughters figuratively mean the kingdoms which they govern, and may here be considered as meaning the Churches gathered from among the Gentiles. The 11th and 12th verses may be considered as an address from God to the Church about to become the spouse of Christ, exhorting her to regard no more

her connections with earth, but to let all things appertaining to the Spirit live and grow in her.

13. Among the converts to Christianity is mentioned the daughter of Tyre, a city once full of iniquity ; she, too, as well as those rich in faith, bring the oblation of their hearts.

14 — 15. By the King's daughter is meant the Hebrew Church after her conversion ; she all glorious, all pure, clothed with the graces of the faithful, with the righteousness of saints, all beautiful in holiness ; represented in the Revelation, as the Holy City, the New Jerusalem

16. With joy and gladness shall they be brought, and shall enter into the King's palace.

17. Instead of thy fathers thou shalt have children, whom thou mayest make princes in all lands.

18. I will make thy Name to be remembered in all generations : therefore shall the people give thanks unto thee, world without end.

O blessed Jesus, the King of Glory, the sceptre of whose kingdom is a right sceptre ; have mercy upon thy whole Church, bless her for ever with righteousness, and let the oil of gladness refresh her amidst the multitude of her sorrows and afflictions ; and as she is all glorious in the purity and perfection of her doctrine, so let her clothing be of wrought gold, shining in the practice of her children ; and let her be adorned with all such exterior ornaments and secular advantages as may best promote the interest of thy true religion and of virtue. Let kings and queens be to her as nursing-fathers and nursing-mothers ; and so let the sound of thy Gospel go forth into all the earth, that her children may be ministers of thy kingdom, advancing thy honour, and

coming down from God out of heaven, and the bride is assured, that instead of adorned as a bride for her husband, is thus her forefathers should arise an illustrious brought unto the King. The Gentile progeny of believers, who should be made Churches are represented as her attendants ; kings and priests unto God and the Father, with joy and gladness they enter heaven, for ever and ever,

farthering the salvation of all men ; that so all may worship thee, and give thee thanks for ever ; who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

FEBRUARY.	}	PSALMS XLVI. & XLVII.
JUNE.		
OCTOBER.		

In the forty-sixth Psalm, the Church declares her full and firm confidence in God, as her refuge and strength, amidst all the tumults and confusions of the world. She describes, and exults in the power and might of her victorious Lord. In the forty-seventh Psalm, the Christian Church calls upon all nations to celebrate the glorious event of our Saviour's ascension into heaven. Who can contemplate the glorious triumph of human nature over its enemies, in the person of our King, risen and ascended, without finding himself constrained to break forth into joy, and to sing, with a thankful heart and an elevated voice, the praises due unto his holy Name. These divine hymns were designed for that purpose : let us therefore sing them, and sing them with understanding ; reflecting

that the eternal Spirit of God speaks in them through the Psalmist, and that the blessed Jesus is the subject of them.

PSALM XLVI.

1. God is our hope and strength ; a very present help in trouble.

2. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved, and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea ;¹

3. Though the waters thereof rage and swell, and though the mountains shake at the tempest of the same.

4. The rivers of the flood thereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most Highest.

5. God is in the midst of her, therefore shall she not be removed ; God shall help her, and that right early.²

6. The heathen raged ; the kingdoms were moved : he uttered his voice ; the earth melted.³

7. The Lord of Hosts is with us ; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

8. O, come hither, and behold the works of the Lord ; what destruction he hath brought upon the earth !

9. He maketh wars to cease in all the world ; he breaketh the bow, and knappeth the spear in sunder, and burneth the chariots in the fire.

⁽¹⁾ When there is distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring — even then the righteous shall have no cause to fear.

⁽²⁾ Such is the ground on which the Church erects her confidence.

⁽³⁾ How concise ! how truly sublime ?

10. Be still, then, and know that I am God ; I will be exalted among the heathen, and I will be exalted in the earth.⁴

11. The Lord of Hosts is with us ; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

PSALM XLVII.

1. O clap your hands together, all ye people : O sing unto God with the voice of melody.

2. For the Lord Most High is terrible ; he is a great King over all the earth.

3. He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.¹

4. He shall choose our inheritance² for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved.

5. God is gone up with a merry noise, and the Lord with the sound of the trump.³

6. O sing praises, sing praises unto our God ! O sing praises, sing praises unto our King !

7. For God is the King of all the earth : sing ye praises⁴ with understanding.

8. God reigneth over the heathen ; God sitteth upon his holy seat.

9. The princes of the people are joined unto the people of the God of Abraham ;⁵ for God, which is very high exalted, doth defend the earth as it were with a shield.

(4) Here Jehovah himself is introduced as commanding the world to cease opposition.

(1) By the power of his word.

(2) An inheritance incorruptible—New Jerusalem.

(3) The ascension of Christ was prefigured by that of the ark into the temple.

(4) The literal meaning of the word "psalms" is praise.

(5) As expressed in the New Testament, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ."

O God, our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, be ready, we beseech thee, to hear the devout prayers of thy Church ; and in all our dangers and necessities, stretch forth the right hand of thy majesty to help and defend us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Almighty Lord, who hath purchased to thyself a Church with thine own blood, look in mercy upon the same, and be thou her sure refuge in all times of trouble : heal the schisms that wound her, and preserve her from errors of faith, and from false doctrines. Look down, we beseech thee, with thine especial favour, upon the Church of this nation, and make her the happy instrument of diffusing among the heathen a knowledge of thy saving health. Grant, O God, that our rulers in distant lands may cause the sound of thy Gospel to be proclaimed therein, and that they may, both in their lives and deeds, shew forth the blessed effects of Christian love. Dispose, we pray thee, the hearts of all who are subjected to their rule, to receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save their souls ; and so fetch home to thy flock all who are still aliens from it, that we may all be united under one

Shepherd, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

FEBRUARY. }

JUNE. }

OCTOBER. }

PSALM XLVIII.

This hymn, though primarily composed in honour of Jerusalem, as particularly chosen for the place of God's immediate worship, after having been in the possession of idolaters, yet figuratively describes the Christian Church, built up on the foundation of Christ and his apostles ; built up in despite of the persecution and opposition of heathen potentates, whose hearts are represented as sinking within them, when discomfited by the irresistible power of the Almighty. The Church heard, by the Prophets, of the birth, sufferings, resurrection, and ascension of the Messiah, of the effusion of the Spirit, and of her own enlargement. These predictions she hath seen accomplished, and therefore doubts not of God's continuing favour to the end of time. Christians are called on to contemplate that spiritual structure within and

without ; to mark well her bulwarks ; to defend the faith of God their Saviour, being assured that he is our God for ever and ever, and will be our guide unto death.

1. Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised, in the city of our God, even upon his holy hill.

2. The hill of Sion is a fair place, and the joy of the whole earth : upon the north side lieth the city of the Great King : God is well known in her palaces as a sure refuge.

3. For lo ! the kings of the earth are gathered, and gone by together.

4. They marvelled to see such things : they were astonished, and suddenly cast down.

5. Fear came there upon them, and sorrow, as upon a woman in her travail.

6. Thou shalt break the ships of the sea through the east wind.¹

7. Like as we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of Hosts, in the city of our God ; God upholdeth the same for ever.²

8. We wait for thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.

9. O God, according to thy Name, so is thy praise unto the world's end : thy right hand is full of righteousness.

10. Let the mount Sion rejoice, and the daughter of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments.

⁽¹⁾ The overthrow of Heathenism is compared to the wreck of a fleet of ships by a storm at sea.

⁽²⁾ Contemplation on all the wondrous works which God hath wrought for us, strengthens faith in his promises, and resignation to his will.

11. Walk about Sion, and go round about her, and tell the towers thereof.

12. Mark well her bulwarks, set up her houses ; that ye may tell them that come after.

13. For this God is our God for ever and ever : he shall be our guide unto death.

O great and glorious Lord God, who art highly to be praised, thou hast manifested thy power and thy mercy in the constitution, propagation, and defence of thy holy Church. Be pleased, according to thy gracious promise, to uphold the same for ever. Let not the gates of hell prevail against her ; make her the joy of the whole earth, and let her be glad and rejoice because of thy judgments. And to us thy servants give thy heavenly grace, that we may worship thee in spirit and in truth ; and not only with our lips, but in our lives, giving up ourselves to thy service, and walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord ; to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

FEBRUARY.	}	PSALM XLIX.
JUNE.		
OCTOBER.		

The prophet, after a solemn introduction, in which the whole world is called upon to hear a lesson of Divine wisdom, proceeds to expose the folly of those who place confidence in their power or wealth, when, after all, neither of these can ransom their souls from the penalty of their sins, or their bodies from the grave. The man who lives in outward honour, and yet wants true wisdom to know himself and to know God, may be said to live as the beasts that perish. Let it be our care to prepare for eternity; let us not set our affections on things on the earth, but use them as we shall wish that we had done when we come to die, namely, as talents committed to our trust by the great Lord of all. Let us work the work of Him that sent us into the world, while it is day, seeing that the night cometh, when no man can work.

1. O hear ye this, all ye people; ponder it with your ears, all ye that dwell in the world;
 2. High and low, rich and poor, one with another.
 3. My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and my heart shall muse of understanding.
-

4. I will incline mine ear to the parable ; and shew my dark speech upon the harp.¹

5. Wherefore should I fear in the days of wickedness ; and when the wickedness of my heels compasseth me round about ?²

6. There be some that put their trust in their goods, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches.³

7. But no man may deliver his brother, nor make agreement unto God for him,

8. (For it cost more to redeem their souls, so that he must let that alone for ever,)

9. That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.⁴

10. For he seeth that wise men also die and perish together, as well as the ignorant and foolish, and leave their riches for others.

11. And yet they think that their houses shall continue for ever ; and that their dwelling-places shall endure from one generation to another, and call the lands after their own names.⁵

12. Nevertheless, man will not abide in honour ; seeing he may be compared unto the beasts that perish.

13. This their way is their folly ; yet their posterity approve their sayings.

14. Like sheep they are laid in the grave :⁶ death shall feed on them, and the upright shall have

(1) The prophet, as the faithful scribe of the Spirit, inclined his ear to that which was spoken.

(2) Wickedness, or infidelity : when the wickedness of the multitude press upon my heels.

(3) See St Luke, xii. 16 and 21.

(4) The 7th and 9th verses should be

understood as following each other, the 8th verse being parenthetical.

(5) Instead of vainly endeavouring to procure for our names and memories an imaginary immortality on earth, let it be the aim of our lives to have our names written in heaven.

(6) Like as sheep are slaughtered.

dominion over them in the morning;⁷ and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.

15. But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for he shall receive me.

16. Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased;⁸

17. For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away : his glory shall not descend after him :

18. Though while he lived, he blessed his soul : and men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.

19. He shall go to the generation of his fathers : they shall never see light.

20. Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.

O God, who of thine infinite love towards mankind, didst send thine only Son to be the propitiation for our sins, and hast through him opened unto us the gates of everlasting life, make us, we beseech thee, devoutly thankful for all the mercies of redemption, and careful to use the good things with which thy bounteous providence hath supplied us in this world with such temperance and moderation as to evince a sense of the awful responsibility which they entail upon us. Endue us with strength to

⁽⁷⁾ In the morning of the resurrection.

⁽⁸⁾ This is addressed to the meek and humble-minded followers of Jesus.

resist the temptations that surround us, and to walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time. Grant, O God, that neither the pleasures of life nor the fears of death may overcome us; but that, being steadfast in faith, immoveable in hope, and abounding in the work of the Lord, we may so pass through things temporal, that we fail not finally to obtain the things eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FEBRUARY.

JUNE.

OCTOBER.

}

PSALM L.

The most profitable meditation we can make on this Psalm, the language of which is so awfully grand, is to refer it to the coming of Christ to judge the world. He says, that he will not reprove his people for having neglected the outward ceremony of sacrifice, but because they relied upon it for justification; because, while they preached his law, and took his covenant, they hated to be reformed, they cast God's word behind them, and dishonoured him by breaking his law. It is for us to consider these things, to live as becomes the profession

we have made, and to exercise ourselves in the delightful duties of praise and thanksgiving ; which duties exalt the powers of the mind, create in us an exquisite sense of God's honour, and teach us to be humble and lowly in our own conceits. The affections of the heart springing from faith, and producing obedience, are the most acceptable tribute we can render unto God, for all his mercies of creation and redemption through Christ.

1. The Lord, even the most mighty God, hath spoken, and called the world, from the rising up of the sun, unto the going down thereof.¹

2. Out of Sion hath God appeared in perfect beauty.

3. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence : there shall go before him a consuming fire ; and a mighty tempest shall be stirred up round about him.

4. He shall call the heaven from above, and the earth, that he may judge his people.

5. Gather my saints together unto me ; those that have made a covenant with me with sacrifice.

6. And the heaven shall declare his righteousness ; for God is judge himself.

7. Hear, O my people, and I will speak : I myself will testify against thee, O Israel ; for I am God, even thy God.

8. I will not reprove thee because of thy sacrifices, or for thy burnt-offerings, because they were not alway before me.²

⁽¹⁾ The nations of the earth, from east to west, are called to a knowledge of the Gospel.

⁽²⁾ Jehovah is represented as acknowledging that their sacrifices and offerings were continually before him.

9. I will take no bullock out of thine house, nor he-goat out of thy folds.

10. For all the beasts of the forest are mine, and so are the cattle upon a thousand hills.

11. I know all the fowls upon the mountains ; and the wild beasts of the field are in my sight.

12. If I be hungry, I will not tell thee : for the whole world is mine, and all that is therein.

13. Thinkest thou that I will eat bulls' flesh, and drink the blood of goats ?

14. Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most Highest.

15. And call upon me in the time of trouble ; so will I hear thee, and thou shalt praise me.

16. But unto the ungodly, said God, Why dost thou preach my laws, and takest my covenant in thy mouth :³

17. Whereas thou hatest to be reformed, and hast cast my words behind thee ?

18. When thou sawest a thief, thou consentedst unto him, and hast been partaker with the adulterers.

19. Thou hast let thy mouth speak wickedness : and with thy tongue thou hast set forth deceit.

20. Thou satest and spakest against thy brother ; yea, and hast slandered thine own mother's son.

21. These things hast thou done, and I held my tongue, and thou thoughtest wickedly that I am⁴ even such a one as thyself ; but I will reprove thee, and set before thee the things that thou hast done.

⁽³⁾ Here God expostulates with the unbelieving Jew, who, without possessing the faith of Abraham, boasted of his descent from him, and boasted of the law, without observing its precepts.

⁽⁴⁾ Thou hast thought that " I AM " is such a one as thyself : I will call thee to account, and I will be thy adversary to thy face.

22. O consider this, ye that forget God; lest I pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you.

23. Whoso offereth me thanks and praise, he honoureth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation right, will I shew the salvation of God.

Almighty and everlasting God, heavenly Father, we give thee humble thanks that thou hast vouchsafed to call us to the knowledge of thy grace and faith in thee; increase this knowledge and confirm this faith in us evermore. Grant us thy Holy Spirit, that we may devote ourselves entirely to thy service; that we may be cleansed from all our sins, and serve thee with a quiet mind; and in thy due time may be made partakers of everlasting salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

FEBRUARY. }
JUNE. }
OCTOBER. }

PSALM LI.

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest:” these are

the comfortable words of our blessed Saviour, addressed to the soul that is sensible of its pollution, that humbles itself in sincere contrition, and turns with true faith to the only source of justification. It is a sad propensity in the human mind, to think too much of our good qualities, and to soften down and excuse to ourselves our bad ones. Shapen as we are in wickedness, and conceived in sin, we have need of constant mistrust of ourselves, constant self-examination, and constant prayers to God for divine grace ; and let us not suppose that because we keep clear of murder and adultery, those great crimes that pressed upon the soul of David, that therefore our hearts must be right towards God. No ! we may not have been subject to those particular temptations, but we have each of us our respective trials to undergo : the world, the flesh, and the devil constantly present occasions of sin, and we need to be reminded that we have to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

1. Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness : according to the multitude of thy mercies, do away mine offences.¹

2. Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin.

3. For I acknowledge my faults, and my sin is ever before me.²

(1) The penitent's first ground for hope of pardon, is God's great goodness and mercy.

(2) The penitent's second plea for mercy is, that he doth not deny, excuse, or palliate his fault.

4. Against thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest bejustified in thy saying, and clear when thou art judged.

5. Behold, I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me.³

6. But lo ! thou requirest truth in the inward parts, and shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly.⁴

7. Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean ; thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.⁵

8. Thou shalt make me hear of joy and gladness ; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

9. Turn thy face from my sins, and put out all my misdeeds.

10. Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.⁶

11. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

12. O give me the comfort of thy help again, and stablish me with thy free Spirit.

13. Then shall I teach thy ways unto the wicked, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

14. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou that art the God of my health ; and my tongue shall sing of thy righteousness.

15. Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord ; and my mouth shall shew thy praise.

16. For thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I

(3) The Divine Mercy alone can dry up the fountain of original corruption, from which transgression flows.

(4) In the inward parts, or in the thoughts of the heart.

(5) From the latter part of the verse we learn, that the pardoned penitent is arrayed in the robe of pure innocence.

(6) A right spirit is renewed within us, when the affections turn from the world to God.

give it thee ; but thou delightest not in burnt-offerings.⁷

17. The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit : a broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt thou not despise.

18. O be favourable and gracious unto Sion ; build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

19. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifice of righteousness, with the burnt-offerings and oblations ; then shall they offer young bullocks upon thine altar.

Most merciful God, who desirest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn and live ; who hast graciously, in thy holy Gospel, provided for our recovery, and encouraged our repentance by many promises of pardon and forgiveness ; fit and prepare us for this exercise of thy abundant mercy, by true sorrow and hearty contrition for our past follies and wickedness, and by a steadfast purpose of entirely forsaking them for the time to come. And then, O heavenly Father, for thine own infinite mercies' sake, for thy truth and promises' sake, for the merits and sufferings of thy well beloved Son, cleanse us from our iniquities, receive us as thy children, and support us by thy Holy Spirit, so that we may continue thine for ever, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

⁽⁷⁾ The thoughts of the Psalmist are so fixed upon evangelical remission of sin, that he speaks as if the Levitical sacrifices had been then abolished.

FEbruary. }
JUNE. } PSALMS LII. & LIV.
OCTOBER. }

The 53d Psalm has been omitted, solely on account of its being very nearly
a repetition of the 14th Psalm.

As the Christian spirit delighteth itself in goodness, truth, and charity, so the antichristian spirit is here characterized by its offending, not out of ignorance or inadvertence, but from mere love of wickedness, falsehood, and malice. In all dangers and difficulties, whether temporal or spiritual, the faithful sons and servants of God fix their eyes upon their heavenly Father and gracious Master : they have recourse to the divine promises, the performance of which they know to be certain, and therefore can foresee and foretell the destruction of the wicked. When Christians consider what great things God hath done for them, surely they will not cease to offer him the free tribute of their hearts, nor suffer the voice of praise and thanksgiving to cease in the Church of the redeemed.

PSALM LII.

1 & 2 Why boastest thou thyself, thou tyrant,
that thou canst do mischief ; whereas the goodness
of God endureth yet daily ?

3. Thy tongue imagineth wickedness ; and with lies thou cuttest like a sharp razor.

4. Thou hast loved unrighteousness more than goodness, and to talk of lies more than righteousness.

5. Thou hast loved to speak all words that may do hurt, O thou false tongue.

6. Therefore shall God destroy thee for ever : he shall take thee and pluck thee out of thy dwelling, and root thee out of the land of the living.¹

7. The righteous also shall see this and fear ; and shall laugh him to scorn.

8. Lo ! this is the man that took not God for his strength, but trusted unto the multitude of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.

9. As for me, I am like a green olive tree in the house of God : my trust is in the tender mercy of God, for ever and ever.

10. I will always give thanks unto thee for that thou hast done ; and I will hope in thy Name, for thy saints like it well.

PSALM LIV.

1. Save me, O God, for thy Name's sake, and avenge me in thy strength.

2. Hear my prayer, O God ; and hearken unto the words of my mouth.

3. For strangers are risen up against me ; and tyrants, which have not God before their eyes, seek after my soul.

⁽¹⁾ Wonderful is the force of the verbs in the original, which convey to us the four ideas of laying prostrate : Dissolving as by fire, — sweeping away as with a besom, — and totally extirpating root and branch, as a tree is eradicated from the place where it grew.

4. Behold, God is my helper ; the Lord is with them that uphold my soul.

5. He shall reward evil unto mine enemies ; destroy thou them in thy truth.

6. An offering of a free heart will I give thee, and praise thy name, O Lord, because it is so comfortable.

7. For he hath delivered me out of all my trouble ; and mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies.

O Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men, keep us, we beseech thee, unspotted from the world. Teach us to restrain our tongues from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering, and from all words which might dishonour thy holy name. Put away from us, O God, all vanity and folly, and direct our thoughts to the contemplation of thy love and goodness towards us, that we may freely offer unto thee the tribute of a grateful heart, and worthily praise and magnify thee, not only with our lips, but in our lives, giving ourselves up to thy service, and walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days ; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FEBRUARY. }
JUNE. }
OCTOBER. }

PSALM LV.

From disappointments and losses — from the unkindness of friends and the malice of enemies — from the weaknesses both of body and soul, we must expect to be disquieted ; and sometimes the burden is so heavy, and the prospect so dark, that we would rather leave the world at once, and fly away in hope of rest. But we must impose patience upon ourselves ; we must beware of a murmuring spirit, and cast our care upon God, for he careth for us. He is the Lord of Hosts ; to him let us steadfastly cleave, not mocking him with smooth words and hollow professions, while in our hearts we have no leaning to his ways. If we serve him in sincerity and truth, we may rest assured that all our trials, of whatsoever nature they may be, will work together for our good.

1. Give ear to my prayer, O God, and hide not thyself from my supplication.

2. Attend unto me, and hear me ; I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise,

3. Because of the voice of the enemy, because of

the oppression of the wicked : for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me.

4. My heart is sore pained within me, and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.

5. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.

6. And I said, O that I had wings like a dove ! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.

7. Lo ! then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness.

8. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest.

9. Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues,¹ for I have seen violence and strife in the city.

10. Day and night they go about it, upon the walls thereof ; mischief also and sorrow are in the midst of it.

11. Wickedness is in the midst thereof ; deceit and guile depart not from her streets.

12. For it was not an enemy that reproached me — then I could have borne it : neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me — then I would have hid myself from him :²

13. But it was thou, — a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance.

14. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.

15. Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell ; for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them.

⁽¹⁾ Ahithophel, who was a traitor towards David, and Judas, who betrayed his Lord, both hanged themselves.

⁽²⁾ Ingratitude, malice, and falsehood, are always found in the character of the traitor.

16. As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me.³

17. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice.

18. He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me ; for there were many with me.

19. God shall hear and afflict them ; even he that abideth of old. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.

20. He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him : he hath broken his covenant.

21. The words of his mouth were smother than butter, but war was in his heart ; his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.⁴

22. Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee : he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

23. But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction ; bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days : but I will trust in thee.

O Almighty God, who art always ready to succour and comfort all such as put their trust in thee, give us, we beseech thee, a hearty desire to pray unto thee ; and in all our dangers and necessities, stretch forth the right

(3) The Christian prays, knowing that He that is for us is greater than he that is against us.

(4) Such is the cant of hypocrites, the benevolence of atheists, and all the allurements which Satan offers to our senses.

hand of thy majesty, to help and defend us, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

O blessed Jesus, who, in thy wise providence, doth sometimes lay upon thy servants crosses and afflictions, as trials of their faith and dependence on thee, we humbly beseech thee mercifully to endue us, in such seasons, with thy heavenly grace. Give us patience to bear with charity the wrongs we suffer from others, and to endure, with meekness and submission, all such afflictive dispensations as thou seest fit to visit us with. Make us, we pray thee, zealous for the good of thy Church, steadfast in our loyalty to our sovereign, true to our friends, and benevolent and kind to all around us : And grant that we may set forth an ensample of godly living ; and finally, O blessed Saviour, may be admitted to thy glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

FEBRUARY. }
JUNE. } PSALM LVI.
OCTOBER. }

The sentiments of this Psalm are applicable to the situation and circumstances of David

pursued by his enemies — of Christ persecuted by the Jews — of the Church afflicted in the world — and of the soul encompassed by enemies, against whom she is forced to wage perpetual war. Known unto God are all the afflictions of his servants here on earth : the tears of the penitent are noted in his book. Only let us serve him faithfully ; and if, in times of sickness or distress, we make vows of obedience, or resolutions of amendment, let us be careful to observe and to keep them, if it should please God to deliver us. If we do thus, and that by God's grace our souls are preserved from sin, we shall, after the night of affliction has passed away, be admitted to walk before him in the light of the living, for ever and ever.

1. Be merciful unto me, O God, for man goeth about to devour me ; he is daily fighting and troubling me.

2. Mine enemies are daily in hand to swallow me up ; for they be many that fight against me, O thou Most Highest.

3. Nevertheless, though I am sometime afraid, yet put I my trust in thee.

4. I will praise God because of his word : I have put my trust in God, and will not fear what flesh can do unto me.

5. They daily mistake my words : all that they imagine is to do me evil.

6. They hold all together, and keep themselves

close, and mark my steps, when they lay wait for my soul.

7. Shall they escape for their wickedness? Thou, O God, in thy displeasure shalt cast them down.

8. Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?

9. Whensoever I call upon thee, then shall mine enemies be put to flight. This I know, for God is on my side.

10. In God's word will I rejoice; in the Lord's word will I comfort me.

11. Yea, in God have I put my trust; I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.

12. Unto thee, O God, will I pay my vows; unto thee will I give thanks.

13. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, and my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living.

O Lord God, in whom we have trusted, who seeth that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves, keep us, we beseech thee, both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities, and may have power to overcome the assaults of the world, the flesh, and the devil, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

O God, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature, we cannot

always stand upright, mercifully grant to us the assistance of thy Holy Spirit. Let him be to us, O Lord, a spirit of sanctification, a spirit of counsel, and a spirit of comfort, inspiring us with patience under afflictions or provocations, with trust and steadfast repose of mind in thy care and providence, and with courage in all times of trouble, and more especially at the hour of death, that, by his almighty power, we may be preserved pure and unblameable, until the glorious appearance of our blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ ; to whom, with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

FEBRUARY.

JUNE.

OCTOBER.

} PSALMS LVII. & LVIII.

The prophet, when offering up a plaintive prayer for deliverance from his enemies, utters sentiments applicable to the case of the Redeemer when persecuted by the Jews, and to the faithful followers of Jesus when suffering persecution in the world. The impotence of human efforts against divine counsels, is variously and strongly illustrated, and the final

triumph of the servants of God is foretold in a manner not designed to create in our breasts animosity against our persecutors, but praise and glory to God. Man is exposed from his very birth to the corruptions of the heart, and to the malignity of Satan; let it then be the care of all persons interested in the welfare of children, to see that their minds are set upon righteousness, and to warn them that doubtless there is a God that judgeth the earth.

PSALM LVII.

1. Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me; for my soul trusteth in thee, and under the shadow of thy wings shall be my refuge, until this tyranny be overpast.

2. I will call unto the most High God, even unto the God that shall perform the cause which I have in hand.

3. He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproof of him that would eat me up.

4. God shall send forth his mercy and truth: my soul is among lions.

5. And I lie even among the children of men, that are set on fire; whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.

6. Set up thyself, O God, above the heavens; and thy glory above all the earth.

7. They have laid a net for my feet, and pressed down my soul: they have digged a pit before me, and are fallen into the midst of it themselves.

8. My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed :
I will sing and give praise.¹

9. Awake up, my glory ; awake, lute and harp :
I myself will awake right early.

10. I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among
the people ; and I will sing unto thee among the
nations.

11. For the greatness of thy mercy reacheth unto
the heavens ; and thy truth unto the clouds.

12. Set up thyself, O God, above the heavens ;
and thy glory above all the earth.

PSALM LVIII.

1. Are your minds set upon righteousness, O ye
congregation ? and do ye judge the thing that is
right, O ye sons of men ?

2. Yea, ye imagine mischief in your heart upon
the earth, and your hands deal with wickedness.

3. The ungodly are froward, even from their
mother's womb : as soon as they are born, they go
astray and speak lies.

4. They are as venomous as the poison of a serpent :
even like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ears ;²

5. Which refuseth to hear the voice of the
charmer, charm he never so wisely.

6. Break their teeth, O God, in their mouths :
smite the jaw-bones of the lions, O Lord ; let them
fall away like water that runneth apace ; and

⁽¹⁾ The prophet here breaks forth into
a strain of exultation at the sure prospects
of deliverance.

⁽²⁾ The wicked are compared to serpents
for that malignity of temper which is the
bane and poison of the intellectual world.

when they shoot their arrows let them be rooted out.²

7. Let them consume away like a snail, and be like the untimely fruit of a woman; and let them not see the sun.

8. Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living and in his wrath.³

9. The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his footsteps in the blood of the ungodly.⁴

10. So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous, doubtless there is a God that judgeth the earth.

O holy and eternal God, who hast, through thy well-beloved Son, established with mankind a covenant of faith and obedience, with the promises of a present supply of grace, and of a future reward to all who steadily persevere in their Christian course; O let us for ever dwell upon these thy great and precious promises, that we may mortify all the corrupt inclinations of our hearts, and conquer those evil habits which bring us into bondage to sin.

(2) The destruction of the wicked is the divine mercy, justice, and truth, displayed in the redemption of the elect, the represented under six similitudes.

(3) The suddenness of destruction of the wicked is here represented. the punishment of the ungodly, and the accomplishment of the promises made to the

(4) This joy is inspired by a view of faithful.

And do thou, O God, work in us all those godly affections that may make our faith effectual to salvation ; let this faith become the governing principle of our lives, composing our minds under all events by a firm trust and confidence in thy all-wise Providence ; and by a settled persuasion that thou wilt order all things for our eternal benefit. And grant, O God, that seeing the reasonableness of those things thou hast required to be believed, and the perfection of those duties which thou hast enjoined to be practised, we may be steadfast, unmoveable, and at last be made partakers of everlasting glory in the world to come, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FEBRUARY. }

JUNE. }

OCTOBER. }

PSALM LIX.

The prophet, in the person of the Messiah, predicts in this Psalm the singular fate of the Jews, who, for their sins, were not extirpated, but were scattered among the nations. Thus doth that people remain at this day a monument of God's wrath for the sin of their mouth, and for the words of their lips ; for the

slanders, lying accusations, and outrageous blasphemies uttered against the Son of God. How terribly they experience, and have for eighteen hundred years experienced, that awful imprecation which they uttered, "His blood be upon us, and upon our children." Let us be wise in our generation—let us not crucify the Lord afresh, nor put him to open shame, by dishonouring our Christian profession. A day of final retribution will succeed to the day of grace, and then it is that God will awake to judge the nations. He will not shew mercy to them that offend of malicious wickedness, but will consume them in his wrath; whilst such as have made him their refuge and strength in this world, shall, in the next, find him a merciful God.

1. Deliver me from mine enemies, O God; defend me from them that rise up against me.¹

2. O deliver me from the wicked doers, and save me from the blood-thirsty men.

3. For lo! they lie waiting for my soul; the mighty men are gathered against me, without any offence or fault of me, O Lord.

4. They run and prepare themselves without my fault: arise thou therefore to help me, and behold.

5. Stand up, O Lord God of hosts, thou God of Israel, to visit all the heathen, and be not merciful unto them that offend of malicious wickedness.

⁽¹⁾ In all times of temptation, or unjust or otherwise, let us cry unto God for persecution, whether for conscience sake help.

6. They return at evening : they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.

7. Behold they speak with their mouth, and swords are in their lips, for who doth hear ?²

8. But thou, O Lord, shalt have them in derision ; and thou shalt laugh all the heathen to scorn.

9. My strength will I ascribe unto thee, for thou art the God of my refuge.

10. God sheweth me his goodness plenteously : and God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies.

11. Slay them not, lest my people forget it ; but scatter them abroad among the people, and put them down, O Lord, our defence.

12. For the sin of their mouth, and for the words of their lips, they shall be taken in their pride ; and why ? their preaching is of cursing and lies.

13. Consume them in thy wrath ; consume them, that they may perish, and know that it is God that ruleth in Jacob, and unto the ends of the world.

14. And at evening let them return ; and let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.

15. Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied.³

16. As for me, I will sing of thy power, and will praise thy mercy betimes in the morning ; for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble.

17. Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing ; for thou, O God, art my refuge and my merciful God.

(²) Wicked men are not restrained by the fear of God.

(³) The punishment inflicted on the wicked often carries the mark of their crime.

Gracious God, who hast endowed us with the faculty of speech, that we might thereby praise and magnify thy Holy Name, and might promote the temporal and eternal welfare of all our fellow mortals, keep, we beseech thee, the door of our lips, that we offend not with our tongue. Let prudence and circumspection govern both our words and actions, that we may be tender of the reputation of our neighbour, and especially careful that we take not thy Holy Name in vain. Let charity unfeigned reign through our thoughts and dispositions, elevating our minds to thee the Author of all good, whose mercy extendeth over all thy works: let us put away all anger, clamour, and evil speaking, and be kindly affectioned one to another. Clothe us, O God, with humility of spirit, and make us habitually to feel and to know that we are always in thy presence; and let the desire of pleasing thee, and the fear of offending thee, restrain us from all evil, and prompt us to every good word and work, that we may invite one another to love, to praise, and glorify thy holy name, and thus prepare ourselves and others for joining the heavenly choir, in singing halleluiahs to thy eternal glory, in the kingdom which thou hast prepared for us, through the merits of Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

FEBRUARY. }
JUNE. } PSALMS LX. & LXI.
OCTOBER. }

When the Church by her sins hath rejected God, she is rejected by him ; she is delivered into the hands of her enemies, and suffers persecution, or becomes a prey to civil dissensions. When by repentance and supplication she returneth to him, he is ready to meet and receive her. The history of Israel is one continued exemplification of these truths, and it should be the care of us all to profit thereby. The Israelites had not only suffered from their enemies the Philistines, by the overthrow of Saul and his army, but from the temporary separation of the tribes immediately after Saul's death. For the temporal salvation of Israel God raised up David, to whose standard, as a centre of unity, the worshippers of the true God might resort ; and for the spiritual salvation of the Church, God hath raised up Jesus, under whose banners all true believers are led to triumph over their greatest and over their last enemy. For the preservation and prosperity, the exaltation, the power, and the everlasting glory of Christ's kingdom, with all the benefits

and blessings thereof, we are bound to sing praise unto God's holy Name for ever and ever.

PSALM LX.

1. O God, thou hast cast us out, and scattered us abroad : thou hast also been displeased ; O turn thee unto us again.

2. Thou hast moved the land and divided it ; heal the sores thereof, for it shaketh.

3. Thou hast shewed thy people heavy things ; thou hast given us a drink of deadly wine.

4. Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth.¹

5. Therefore were thy beloved delivered ; help me with thy right hand, and hear me.

6. God hath spoken in his holiness, I will rejoice, and divide Sichem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.²

7. Gilead is mine, and Manasses is mine ; Ephraim also is the strength of my head : Judah is my law-giver.

8. Moab is my wash-pot : over Edom will I cast out my shoe ; Philistia, be thou glad of me.

9. Who will lead me into the strong city ; who will bring me into Edom ?³

(¹) Remarkable are the words of Isaiah, " In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people : to it shall the Gentiles seek."

(²) In 2d Samuel, 3d chapter, we read, " The Lord hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David, I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." David, therefore, here exults prophetically as a conqueror.

(³) Bozrah, the capital of Idumea, or Edom, was a fortified town deemed impregnable. David acknowledges the need he had of superior aid to achieve the conquest. How great is our need of a Saviour, to enable us to triumph over Death ! " Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah ?" Isaiah, lxiii. 1. " Lord, to whom shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

10. Hast not thou cast us out, O God? wilt not thou, O God, go out with our hosts?

11. O be thou our help in trouble, for vain is the help of man.

12. Through God will we do great acts: for it is he that shall tread down our enemies.⁴

PSALM LXI.

1. Hear my crying, O God, give ear unto my prayer.¹

2. From the ends of the earth will I call upon thee, when my heart is in heaviness.

3. O set me up upon the rock that is higher than I: for thou hast been my hope, and a strong tower for me against the enemy.

4. I will dwell in thy tabernacle for ever; and my trust shall be under the covering of thy wings.

5. For thou, O Lord, hast heard my desires, and hast given an heritage unto those that fear thy name.

6. Thou shalt grant the King a long life; that his years may endure throughout all generations.²

7. He shall dwell before God for ever: O prepare thy loving mercy and faithfulness, that they may preserve him.

8. So will I alway sing praise unto thy name, that I may daily perform my vows.³

(¹) The world is, to Christians, a sea of troubles and temptations. God alone can deliver us, by placing us on the Rock of Salvation, which is Christ Jesus.

of whose kingdom there shall be no end."

(²) Let every Christian, as he values his salvation, be mindful of his baptismal vows.

(³) These words apply to the Messiah,

O Almighty God, who hast built thy Church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner stone, grant that all Christians may be so joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that they may be made an holy temple, acceptable unto thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Lord, we beseech thee to keep thy Church and household continually in thy true religion, that they who do lean only upon the hope of thy heavenly grace, may evermore be defended by thy mighty power, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, who, through thy only begotten Son Jesus Christ, hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life, we humbly beseech thee, that as, by thy special grace preventing us, thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

FEBRUARY. }
JUNE. } PSALM LXII.
OCTOBER. }

The comforts which David had found from placing his whole trust and confidence in God, he exhorts others to seek in faith and prayer, — in such a faith as fixeth itself on God when the whole world is against us, and such prayer as poureth forth the inmost desires of the soul to an almighty and most merciful Father. How often, in repeating the Psalms, do we declare with our lips that God is our refuge, yet how very seldom do we shew by our conduct that we consider him as such ! At the conclusion of this Psalm, the inspired writer recommends meditation on the power of God to punish sin, and on his mercy in forgiving it when duly repented of : fear of his power would beget in us a desire of his mercy ; and these two principles, associated with faith in the merits of Christ, would enable us to bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

1. My soul truly waiteth still upon God ; for of him cometh my salvation.¹

⁽¹⁾ Trust in God will restrain us from seeking to accomplish even a good purpose by unlawful means.

2. He verily is my strength and my salvation. He is my defence, so that I shall not greatly fall.

3. How long will ye imagine mischief against every man ; ye shall be slain all the sort of you ; yea, as a tottering wall shall ye be, and like a broken hedge.²

4. Their device is only how to put him out, whom God will exalt : their delight is in lies : they give good words with their mouth, but curse with their heart.

5. Nevertheless, my soul, wait thou still upon God ; for my hope is in him.

6. He truly is my strength and my salvation ; he is my defence, so that I shall not fall.

7. In God is my health and my glory ; the rock of my might, and in God is my trust.

8. O put your trust in him alway, ye people ; pour out your hearts before him, for God is our hope.

9. As for the children of men, they are but vanity ; the children of men are deceitful upon the weights ;³ they are altogether lighter than vanity itself.

10. O trust not in wrong and robbery ; give not yourselves unto vanity ; if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.⁴

11. God spake once and twice ; I have also heard the same, that power belongeth unto God.

12. And that thou, Lord, art merciful ; for thou rewardest every man according to his work.

⁽²⁾ How striking is this expostulation, if considered as addressed by the Messiah to the enemies of his Name.

⁽³⁾ When weighed in the balance.

⁽⁴⁾ He who is made vain and covetous by money, drowneth himself in the spring that should have watered all around him.

O Lord God, of whom cometh our salvation ; thou art our defence and strength, our help and glory : give us thy grace, that we may put our whole trust in thee alway ; that we may pour out our hearts before thee in all our troubles and adversities, whensoever they oppress us ; that we may wait upon thee for the fulfilment of our expectation, in all our longings and desires. Be thou our defence ; uphold us that we may not fall into those great sins which offend our consciences, or into such miseries as leave us without hope or remedy. Teach us to disclaim all trust in riches, and to despise all lying vanities, that when thou shalt come with power and great glory, to reward every man according to his work, thou mayest be merciful unto us, not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offences, and receiving us to life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FEBRUARY.

JUNE.

OCTOBER.

}

PSALM LXIII.

David in the wilderness thirsts after God — that is, desires to behold his power and glory,

with the same eagerness that a thirsty person longeth to drink.' The praise of God was as marrow and fatness to his soul: to remember God in the night-watches was his delight, seeing that he had been his helper and defender. How doth the Christian feel when contemplating the mercies of redemption? In our own cases, I would ask, does it rejoice us to devote our thoughts to a future life? or are we incessantly thinking upon the perishing concerns of the present world? Let us try our progress in devotedness to God, by the turn which our thoughts habitually take; and let us be assured, that until we can find real enjoyment in contemplating the prospect that awaits us in another life, we are not in a fit state to enter thereon.

1. O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee.

2. My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh also longeth after thee, in a barren and dry land, where no water is;

3. To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.

4. For thy loving-kindness is better than the life itself: my lips shall praise thee.

5. As long as I live, will I magnify thee on this manner, and lift up my hands in thy Name.

6. My soul shall be satisfied even as it were with marrow and fatness, when my mouth praiseth thee with joyful lips.

7. Have I not remembered thee in my bed, and thought upon thee when I was waking?

8. Because thou hast been my helper : therefore under the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.

9. My soul hangeth upon thee ; thy right hand bath upholden me.

10. These also that seek the hurt of my soul, they shall go under the earth.

11. Let them fall upon the edge of the sword, that they may be a portion for foxes.

12. But the King shall rejoice in God ; all they also that swear by him shall be commended : for the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.

Almighty God, whom truly to know is the supreme happiness of a rational creature, fix our thoughts, our hopes, and our desires, upon heaven and heavenly things ; let us remember thee upon our bed when we lie down to rest, and devote to thee our first and earliest thoughts. Grant that we may consider thy precepts, so as to understand the measures of our duty, and may have grace faithfully to govern all our actions by those rules which thou hast prescribed to us. Fortify our minds, we beseech thee, with power to resist those sins and follies which most easily beset us, and so inure our hearts to the contemplation of spiritual objects, that they may be cleansed from all impurities, and may be disposed to meditate

with joy and thankfulness on the wondrous works thou hast done for us, and on the glorious hopes thou hast set before us through Jesus Christ. Let not the pursuit of temporal objects divert us from serious thoughts of the life to come ; but grant, O heavenly Father, that our aspirations after heavenly things may daily become more and more vivid, until that hour arrives when thou art pleased to call us home, and when, we humbly hope, that, through the merits of Jesus Christ, thou wilt be pleased to take us to thyself, and to make us partakers of those everlasting joys which thou hast prepared for them that love thee. Hear us, O merciful Father, for the sake of our blessed Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FEbruary.	}	PSALMS LXIV. & LXV.
JUNE.		
OCTOBER.		

The sixty-fourth Psalm is spoken in reference to the Messiah. It contains a prayer for protection against his enemies, whose designs, and whose secret counsels against his life, are herein adverted to, and their punishment is foretold.

The devices of wicked men cost much labour and thought, but the course which virtue and honesty point out, is generally easy and simple ; and whilst the issue of the former is shame, that of the latter is an approving conscience, and the favour of Heaven. The sixty-fifth Psalm appears to have been a thanksgiving for getting in the fruits of the earth. The prophet declares the blessedness of the elect in Christ, and predicts the wonderful things which God would do for the salvation of men ; under the beautiful image of the fertility produced by kindly showers of rain, is represented the gracious effects of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church, and upon the hearts of all her faithful members.

PSALM LXIV.

1. Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer ; preserve my life from fear of the enemy.
2. Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked ; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity ;
3. Who have whet their tongue like a sword, and shoot out their arrows, even bitter words ;
4. That they may privily shoot at him that is perfect : suddenly do they hit him, and fear not.¹
5. They encourage themselves in mischief ; and commune among themselves how they may lay snares, and say that no man shall see them.

⁽¹⁾ By Him that is perfect, or " the Just One," the prophet refers to Christ.

6. They imagine wickedness, and practise it : that they keep secret among themselves, every man in the deep of his heart.

7. But God shall suddenly shoot at them with a swift arrow, that they shall be wounded.

8. Yea, their own tongues shall make them fall ; insomuch, that whoso seeth them shall laugh them to scorn.

9. And all men that see it shall say, This hath God done ; for they shall perceive that it is his work.²

10. The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord, and put his trust in him : and all they that are true of heart shall be glad.

PSALM LXV.

1. Thou, O God, art praised in Sion ; and unto thee shall the vow be performed in Jerusalem.

2. Thou that hearest the prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.

3. My misdeeds prevail against me : O be thou merciful unto our sins.

4. Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and receivest unto thee : he shall dwell in thy court, and shall be satisfied with the pleasures of thy house, even of thy holy temple.

5. Thou shalt shew us wonderful things in thy righteousness, O God of our salvation ; thou that art the hope of all the ends of the earth, and of them that remain in the broad sea.¹

(¹) It is remarkable that the desolation of the once holy and beloved city " filled all men with fear " and astonishment, forcing them to acknowledge and declare it to be the work of God.

(²) This was accomplished in the death and resurrection of Christ, the overthrow of idolatry, and the conversion of the nations, and will be still farther made known at the second manifestation of the Son of God in the glory of his Father.

6. Who in his strength setteth fast the mountains, and is girded about with power.

7. Who stilleth the raging of the sea ; and the noise of his waves ; and the madness of the people.

8. They, also, that dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth shall be afraid at thy tokens ; thou that makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to praise thee.

9. Thou visitest the earth, and blessest it : thou makest it very plenteous.²

10. The river of God is full of water : thou preparest their corn, for so thou providest for the earth.

11. Thou waterest her furrows ; thou sendest rain into the little valleys thereof ; thou makest it soft with the drops of rain, and blessest the increase of it.

12. Thou crownest the year with thy goodness ; and thy clouds drop fatness.

13. They shall drop upon the dwellings of the wilderness, and the little hills shall rejoice on every side.

14. The folds shall be full of sheep ; the valleys, also, shall stand so thick with corn, that they shall laugh and sing.

O God, the hope of all the ends of the earth, and of them that remain in the broad sea, be thou merciful unto our sins, and let not our

(2) See Isaiah, lv. 10. Manifold and marvellous are thy works, O Lord, whether of nature or of grace !

misdeeds prevail against us, so as either to make us habitually sinful, or endlessly miserable: but give us the blessings of thy chosen; let us receive the influence of thy grace and benediction; and as thou upholdest us with thy right hand, shewing us wonderful things in thy righteousness and salvation, so let thy arm ever protect us; and grant unto us such a portion of temporal blessings as shall be necessary for us. Make the earth plenteous, and bless the increase of it; crown the year with thy goodness; and let thy clouds drop fatness, that the valleys standing thick with corn, may proclaim thy goodness, and sing thy praise; and that we being refreshed with the multitude of blessings, both temporal and spiritual, may glorify thy holy Name whilst on earth, and may evermore sing unto thee eternal hallelujahs in the heavenly Jerusalem, where thou livest and reignest one God, world without end. Amen.

FEBRUARY.

JUNE.

OCTOBER.

} PSALMS LXVI. & LXVII.

The whole world is called upon to lift up her voice in praise and thanksgiving for the

wonderful works of God. The prophet recalls to the minds of the people, his wonders of old time ; and in adverting to their troubles, warns us to expect that we also shall experience our trials : but let us recollect that he who brought Israel through the Red Sea, hath also promised to all who pray to him, that he will, through the aid of the Holy Spirit, bring them safely through the waves of this troublesome world, unto a land of everlasting peace and rest.

In the sixty-seventh Psalm, the Hebrew Church is introduced as partly praying for and partly foretelling the advent of Christ, and the conversion of the Gentile nations, with the joy and gladness consequent thereon. The evangelical blessings here predicted have been in a great measure poured out upon the world, and the fruits thereof are evinced by an increase of brotherly love and charity. Let us endeavour to make them more and more conspicuous by indulgence to each other's infirmities, and shewing compassion to each other's weakness, thus exhibiting in our conduct the blessed effects of living in this world in the faith and fear of God, and thus turning others to righteousness, that they may be partakers with us of everlasting happiness in the life to come.

PSALM LXVI.

1. O be joyful in God, all ye lands ; sing praises unto the honour of his Name ; make his praise to be glorious.

2. Say unto God, O how wonderful art thou in thy works ; through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies be found liars¹ unto thee.

3. For all the world shall worship thee, sing of thee, and praise thy Name.

4. O come hither and behold the works of God ; how wonderful he is in his doing toward the children of men.

5. He turned the sea into dry land, so that they went through the water on foot ; there did we rejoice thereof.

6. He ruleth with his power for ever ; his eyes behold the people, and such as will not believe shall not be able to exalt themselves.

7. O praise our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard ;

8. Who holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to slip.

9. For thou, O God, hast proved us : thou also hast tried us like as silver is tried.²

10. Thou broughtest us into the snare ; and laidest trouble upon our loins.

11. Thou sufferedst men to ride over our heads : we went through fire and water ; and thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.

⁽¹⁾ *Bible version*.—"Shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee."

⁽²⁾ Notwithstanding the mercy of God, we are here taught to expect afflictions and trials.

12. I will go into thine house with burnt-offerings ; and will pay thee my vows which I promised with my lips, and spake with my mouth, when I was in trouble.³

13. I will offer unto thee fat burnt-sacrifices, with the incense of rams : I will offer bullocks and goats.

14. O come hither and hearken, all ye that fear God ; and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul.

15. I called unto him with my mouth ; and gave him praises with my tongue.

16. If I incline unto wickedness with mine heart, the Lord will not hear me.

17. But God hath heard me, and considered the voice of my prayer.

18. Praised be God, who hath not cast out my prayer ; nor turned his mercy from me.

PSALM LXVII.

1. God be merciful unto us, and bless us ; and shew us the light of his countenance, and be merciful unto us.

2. That thy way may be known upon earth ; thy saving health among all nations.¹

3. Let the people praise thee, O God ; yea, let all the people praise thee.

4. O let the nations rejoice and be glad ; for thou shalt judge the folk righteously, and govern the nations upon earth.

(³) Let us offer up ourselves, our souls and bodies, (by leading a godly, righteous, and sober life,) to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice. Let us receive the

cup of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord.

(¹) Thy saving health ; or. Thy salvation.

5. Let the people praise thee, O God ; let all the people praise thee.

6. Then shall the earth bring forth her increase ; and God, even our own God, shall give us his blessing.

7. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the world shall fear him.

O Lord God, who art wonderful in thy works, and in thy doings towards the children of men, and chastisest every one whom thou receivest, proving us and trying us ; let thy merciful hands sustain us through the fight of our afflictions, and the fire of adversity. Lead us, we beseech thee, by thy Holy Spirit, beside the waters of comfort, and bring us at the last to the mansions of thy eternal rest. Let not our hearts be inclined to wickedness, that our feet may not slip ; but grant that, having respect to thy will and pleasure, we may walk soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, that so thou mayest hear us, and consider the voice of our prayer, and make us partakers of that salvation which thou hast wrought out for all repentant sinners through the sufferings of Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

FEBRUARY. }

JUNE. }

OCTOBER. }

PSALM LXVIII.

This beautiful, sublime, and comprehensive, but, at the same time, difficult Psalm, opens with that solemn invocation which was used by Moses, whenever the ark set forward before the armies of Israel in their way to Canaan. The deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage is alluded to ; the victories which God hath wrought for his people, and the establishment among them of the immediate presence of God, by the ark resting on Mount Sion, are spoken of ; and all nations are incited to praise and magnify God's holy Name, who alone giveth strength and power to his people, and taketh vengeance on their enemies as being also his enemies. Christians use this Psalm as figuratively denoting the victories of Christ over Satan and over death, and the consequent deliverance of his people from the captivity of sin ; accompanied as these victories are by the promised assistance of his Holy Spirit to all who humbly seek it, and the assurances of eternal life to all who worthily believe on his Name.

1. Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered :
let them also that hate him flee before him.¹

2. Like as the smoke vanisheth, so shalt thou
drive them away ; and like as wax melteth at the
fire, so let the ungodly perish at the presence of
God.

3. But let the righteous be glad, and rejoice
before God ; let them also be merry and joyful.

4. O sing unto God, and sing praises unto his
Name : extol him that rideth upon the heavens by
his name **JAH**,² and rejoice before him.

5. He is a father of the fatherless,³ and defendeth
the cause of the widows, even God in his holy
habitation.

6. God setteth the solitary in families : he
bringeth out those which are bound with chains ;
but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.

7. O God, when thou wentest forth before the
people, when thou wentest through the wilderness,⁴

8. The earth shook, and the heavens dropped at
the presence of God ; even as Sinai also was moved
at the presence of God, who is the God of Israel.

9. Thou, O God, sentest a gracious rain upon
thine inheritance, and refreshedst it when it was
weary.

10. Thy congregation shall dwell therein ; for
thou, O God, hast of thy goodness prepared for the
poor.

(¹) These were the words used by
Moses whenever the ark set forward
before the armies of Israel.

(²) By his name Jah, is implied, the
self-existent eternal God.

(³) God is our Father through Christ,
and delivereth repentant sinners from the
bondage of sin.

(⁴) The Christian Church singing this
Psalm commemorates her redemption.

11. The Lord gave the word ; great was the company of those that published it.

12. Kings, with their armies, did flee, and were discomfited, and they of the household divided the spoil.

13. Though ye have lien among the pots,⁵ yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove, that is covered with silver wings, and her feathers like gold.

14. When the Almighty scattered kings for their sake ; then were they as white as snow in Salmon.

15. As the hill of Basan, so is God's hill ; even an high hill, as the hill of Basan.

16. Why hop ye so, ye high hills ?⁶ this is God's hill, in the which it pleaseth him to dwell ; yea, the Lord will abide in it for ever.

17. The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels ; and the Lord is among them, as in the holy place of Sinai.

18. Thou art gone up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men ;⁷ yea, even for thine enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

19. Praised be the Lord daily ; even the God who helpeth us, and poureth his benefits upon us.

20. He is our God, even the God of whom cometh salvation ; God is the Lord by whom we escape death.

⁽⁵⁾ Though ye have laid among the pots of Egypt, (been in abject slavery,) yet shall ye be placed in a state of dignity and splendour in Canaan. So also the Church, emerged from persecution ; and so also the soul of man, delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

⁽⁶⁾ The Psalmist poetically represents the different hills as contending for the honour of God's immediate presence. The Christian Church is now the Spiritual Sion.

⁽⁷⁾ See the application of this passage to Christ, made by St Paul, Eph. iv. 8

21. God shall wound the head of his enemies ; and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his wickedness.

22. The Lord hath said, I will bring my people again, as I did from Basan ; mine own will I bring again, as I did sometime from the deep of the sea.

23. That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and that the tongue of thy dogs may be rid through the same.

24. It is well seen, O God, how thou goest ; how thou, my God and king, goest in the sanctuary.⁸

25. The singers go before, the minstrels follow after ; in the midst are the damsels playing with the timbrels.

26. Give thanks, O Israel, unto God the Lord in the congregations, from the ground of the heart.

27. There is little Benjamin their ruler, and the princes of Judah their counsel ; the princes of Zabulon, and the princes of Naphthali.

28. Thy God hath sent forth strength for thee ; stablish the thing, O God, that thou hast wrought for us,

29. For thy temple's sake at Jerusalem ; so shall kings bring presents unto thee.

30. Rebuke the company of the spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, (till every one) submit himself with pieces of silver : scatter thou the people that delight in war.⁹

(8) The people of Israel had a pledge of those mighty things which God would do for them, by the victorious establishment of the ark of his presence on Mount Zion ; so we Christians have a like pledge in the ascension of our Saviour into heaven.

(9) This verse is a prayer of the prophet, to the effect, that it would please God to overthrow the strength, the pride, and the idolatry of Egypt, the ancient adversary and oppressor of Israel.

31. Then shall the princes come out of Egypt ;
Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.

32. Sing unto God, O ye kingdoms of the earth ;
O sing praises unto the Lord ;

33. Who sitteth in the heavens over all from the
beginning : lo ! he doth send out his voice ; yea, and
that a mighty voice.

34. Ascribe ye the power to God over Israel ; his
worship and strength is in the clouds.

35. O God, wonderful art thou in thy holy places,
even the God of Israel : he will give strength and
power unto his people. Blessed be God.

O Lord God, mighty and merciful—mighty
in thy judgments towards all hardened sinners,
but of tender mercy towards such as, with true
faith and hearty repentance, turn unto thee—
shower down upon us, we beseech thee, the
gracious dew of thy divine blessing ; refresh us
who are wearied with the burden of our sins,
bring us forth from the captivity of our own
sinful lusts, and bestow upon us that choicest
of thy gifts to us in this life—the gift of thy
Holy Spirit, that, by his aid, we may escape
the bitterness of death, and be made partakers
of thy future gifts in a blessed resurrection to
eternal life. O God, who art the Father of the
fatherless, and defendeth the cause of the
widows, be pleased to succour all those who,

in this transitory life, are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity ; sanctify to them their trials, and in thine own good time bring them out of all their afflictions. Let all the princes of the earth sing praises unto thee, O Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty God, the Everlasting Saviour, the Prince of Peace, that thy gospel going forth into all lands, all kingdoms of the earth may be made one fold, under one shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord ; to whom, with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

FEBRUARY. }

JUNE. }

OCTOBER. }

PSALM LXIX.

The Psalmist herein speaks in the person of the Messiah addressing his heavenly Father in prayer. The subject of this prayer is the depth of misery imposed upon our Saviour by the burden of our sins. The implacable hatred borne towards him by the Jews is described by images which, however forcible, can hardly convey to our minds adequate conceptions of

the persecutions he underwent for our sakes, or of the sorrow which our sins occasioned him. He appeals for comfort and support to the mercy and loving-kindness of God, as every Christian should do in the hour of affliction. He then predicts the fate of his enemies, in language which is not to be considered as imprecatory, but as prophetic; for we know that Christ prayed for his enemies, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Let this Psalm encourage meditation on the great work of our redemption; let it kindle in our minds the most ardent love towards our Saviour, thus suffering for us. The humble shall consider this and be glad. Seek ye after God, and your soul shall live.

1, 2, and 3. Save me, O God, for the waters are come in, even unto my soul; I stick fast in the deep mire, where no ground is; I am come into deep waters, so that the floods run over me.¹ I am weary of crying, my throat is dry, my sight faileth me, for waiting so long upon my God.

4 and 5. They that hate me without a cause,² are more than the hairs of my head; they that are mine enemies, and would destroy me guiltless, are mighty. I paid them the things that I never took. God, thou knowest my simpleness, and my faults are not hid from thee.

6 and 7. Let not them that trust in thee, O Lord

¹ Compare this with Hebrews, v. 7. ⁽²⁾ The Jews, the Romans, and the spirits of darkness.

God of hosts, be ashamed for my cause ; let not those that seek thee be confounded through me, O Lord God of Israel. And why ? For thy sake have I suffered reproof, shame hath covered my face.

8. and 9. ³ I am become a stranger unto my brethren, even an alien unto my mother's children ; for the zeal of thine house hath even eaten me, and the rebukes of them that rebuked thee are fallen upon me.⁴

10, 11, and 12. I wept and chastened myself with fasting, and that was turned to my reproof ; I put on sackcloth also, and they jested upon me ; they that sit in the gate speak against me, and the drunkards make songs upon me.⁵

13 and 14. But, Lord, I make my prayer unto thee in an acceptable time :⁶ Hear me, O God, in the multitude of thy mercy, even in the truth of thy salvation.

15 and 16. Take me out of the mire, that I sink not : O let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters : Let not the waterflood drown me, neither let the deep swallow me up ; and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.⁷

17 and 18. Hear me, O Lord, for thy loving-kindness is comfortable : turn thee unto me according to the multitude of thy mercies, and hide not thy face from thy servant, for I am in trouble : O haste thee and hear me.

19 and 20. Draw nigh unto my soul, and save it ;

(³) See John, i. 11 ; viii. 48 ; ix. 29.

(⁴) See John, ii. 17 ; Romans, xv. 3.

(⁵) To expiate the sins of his creatures, the King of Glory became a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, despised

and rejected of men, the very scorn of men, and the outcast of the people.

(⁶) The acceptable time was when he offered the great propitiatory sacrifice.

(⁷) The latter part of this prayer is to the effect that he might triumph over death.

O deliver me because of mine enemies. Thou hast known my reproof, my shame, and my dishonour ; mine adversaries are all in thy sight.

21 and 22. Thy rebuke hath broken my heart ; I am full of heaviness. I looked for some to have pity on me, but there was no man ; neither found I any to comfort me. They gave me gall to eat, and when I was thirsty, they gave me vinegar to drink.⁸

23 and 24.⁹ Let their table be made a snare to take themselves withal ; and let the things which should have been for their wealth, be unto them an occasion of falling ; let their eyes be blinded, that they see not ; and ever bow thou down their backs.

25 and 26. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful displeasure take hold of them ; let their habitation be void, and no man to dwell in their tents.

27. For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten, and they talk how they may vex them whom thou hast wounded.

28 and 29. Let them fall from one wickedness to another, and not come into thy righteousness : let them be wiped out of the book of the living, and not be written among the righteous.

30, 31, and 32.¹⁰ As for me, when I am poor and in heaviness, thy help, O God, shall lift me up. I

(⁸) See Matthew, xxvii. 34.

(⁹) At this verse begins a prediction of those dreadful judgments which Heaven has since inflicted upon the crucifiers of the Lord of Glory, and which the Jews imprecated on themselves and their children.

See Rom. xi. 9, 10 ; 1 Thes. ii. 15, 16 ; Matt. xxiii. 33 ; Acts, i. 20 ; i. 16.

(¹⁰) The infinite superiority between the best legal sacrifice and those of obedience, love, and praise, as offered by Christ, is here pointed out.

will praise the Name of God with a song, and magnify it with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord, better than a bullock that hath horns and hoofs.

33 and 34. The humble shall consider this, and be glad. Seek ye after God, and your soul shall live ; for the Lord heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners.⁽¹¹⁾

35. Let heaven and earth praise him, the sea, and all that moveth therein.

36 and 37.⁽¹²⁾ For God will save Sion, and build the cities of Judah, that men may dwell there, and have it in possession : the posterity also of his servants shall inherit it, and they that love his Name shall dwell therein.

Almighty God, who, of thy tender love to all mankind, didst send thine only Son Jesus Christ to take our nature upon him — didst suffer him to be wounded for our transgressions, to be bruised for our iniquities, that by his stripes, the just suffering for the unjust, we might be healed, — O give us grace to contemplate this great mystery, and the exceeding love of our blessed Saviour, with humility of mind, with contrition of soul, and with devotion of heart. Fill us with an awful sense of the heinousness of sin, of thy unbending justice

⁽¹¹⁾ By the Lord's prisoners are meant those who feel the bondage of sin.

⁽¹²⁾ We may read this as of our spiritual Sion, the Church.

towards hardened sinners, and of thy great mercy towards all who sincerely repent and turn from their sins, and fly to him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. O Lord, grant us grace henceforward to walk before thee in newness of life, continually mortifying all our corrupt and evil affections, and evincing by our lives the obedience of faith in that adorable Saviour who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification ; to whom, with thee and the Holy Spirit, be glory and praise, now and for evermore. Amen.

FEBRUARY. }

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PSALM LXXI.

The Seventieth Psalm is omitted, as being nearly in the same words as the latter part of the Fortieth.

In time of affliction, the Christian may well resort to this prayer of David, which commences with a declaration of his firm trust and confidence in Almighty God. Let us, in all such seasons, hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, recollecting what great things God hath already done for us, and that, although he may shew us troubles and adver-

sities in this life, yet he will turn and refresh us, bringing us from the deep of the earth again ; and let us all remember that the promises of salvation are made to those who, renouncing all confidence in the world and in themselves, trust to God alone for it.

1. In thee, O Lord, have I put my trust, let me never be put to confusion, but rid me, and deliver me, in thy righteousness ; incline thine ear unto me, and save me.

2. Be thou my strong hold, whereunto I may always resort. Thou hast promised to help me, for thou art my house of defence and my castle.

3. Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the ungodly, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.

4. For thou, O Lord God, art the thing that I long for ; thou art my hope even from my youth.

5. Through thee have I been holden up ever since I was born ; thou art he that took me out of my mother's womb ; my praise shall be always of thee.

6. I am become, as it were, a monster¹ unto many ; but my sure trust is in thee.

7. O let my mouth be filled with thy praise, that I may sing of thy glory and honour all the day long.

8. Cast me not away in the time of age ; forsake me not when my strength faileth me.

9. For mine enemies speak against me, and they that lay wait for my soul take their counsel together, saying, God hath forsaken him ; persecute him, and take him, for there is none to deliver him.

¹ (1) A monster, or a wonder—one supposed to lie under God's displeasure—a warning.

10. Go not far from me, O God ; my God, haste thee to help me.

11. Let them be confounded and perish that are against my soul ; let them be covered with shame and dishonour that seek to do me evil.

12. As for me, I will patiently abide alway, and will praise thee more and more.

13. My mouth shall daily speak of thy righteousness and salvation, for I know no end thereof.

14. I will go forth in the strength of the Lord God, and will make mention of thy righteousness only.

15. Thou, O God, hast taught me from my youth up until now ; therefore will I tell of thy wondrous works.

16. Forsake me not, O God, in mine old age, when I am grey-headed, until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to all them that are yet for to come.

17. Thy righteousness, O God, is very high, and great things are they that thou hast done. O God, who is like unto thee ?

18. O what great troubles and adversities hast thou shewed me, and yet didst thou turn and refresh me, yea, and broughtest me from the deep of the earth again.

19. Thou hast brought me to great honour, and comforted me on every side.

20. Therefore will I praise thee and thy faithfulness, O God, playing upon an instrument of music ; unto thee will I sing upon the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel.

21. My lips will be fain² when I sing unto thee, and so will my soul whom thou hast delivered.

⁽²⁾ Will be fain, or greatly rejoice.

22. My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long ; for they are confounded and brought unto shame that seek to do me evil.

Lord of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things, graft in our hearts the love of thy Name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We humbly beseech thee, O Father, mercifully to look upon our infirmities, and for the glory of thy Name turn from us all those evils which we most righteously have deserved ; and grant that, in all our troubles, we may put our whole trust and confidence in thy mercy, and evermore serve thee in holiness and pureness of living, to thy honour and glory, through our only Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FEBRUARY. }
JUNE. }
OCTOBER. }

PSALM LXXII.

There are so many verses in this Psalm that could not be applied to Solomon, that it is

quite plain that the Psalmist speaks prophetically of the reign of Messiah. His language corresponds very closely with that of Isaiah, and other sacred writers, both in the Old and New Testament. O may that day come quickly, when the Gospel of Christ shall be set up in all the nations of the earth, making them fruitful in righteousness and in peace. And when we pray for those who are near and dear to us, let us desire for them rather spiritual than temporal blessings, that the dew of the divine blessing may descend into their hearts, and that we may all be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

1. Give the King thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the King's son.¹

2. Then shall he judge thy people according unto right, and defend the poor.²

3. The mountains also shall bring peace ; and the little hills righteousness unto the people.³

4. He shall keep the simple folk by their right, defend the children of the poor, and punish the wrong-doer.⁴

5. They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endureth, from one generation to another.⁵

6. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass ; as showers that water the earth.⁶

(1) See Isaiah, ix. 7 ; xxxii. 1.

(5) Luke, i. 33.

(2) John, v. 22.

(6) Isaiah, xlv. 3 and 4 ; lv. 10 ;

(3) Isaiah, lii. 7 and 8.

Hebrews, vi. 7.

(4) By the simple folk, is meant the meek.

7. In his time shall the righteous flourish ; yea, and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth.

8. His dominion shall be also from the one sea to the other ; and from the flood unto the world's end.⁷

9. They that dwell in the wilderness shall kneel before him : his enemies shall lick the dust.⁸

10. The kings of Tharsis, and of the isles, shall give presents : the kings of Arabia, and Saba, shall bring gifts.

11. All kings shall fall down before him ; all nations shall do him service.

12. For he shall deliver the poor when he crieth, the needy also, and him that hath no helper.

13. He shall be favourable to the simple and needy ; and shall preserve the souls of the poor.

14. He shall deliver their souls from falsehood and wrong, and dear shall their blood be in his sight.

15. He shall live, and unto him shall be given of the gold of Arabia ; prayer shall be made ever unto him, and daily shall he be praised.

16. There shall be an heap of corn in the earth, high upon the hills : his fruit shall shake like Libanus, and shall be green in the city like grass upon the earth.⁹

17. His Name shall endure for ever ; his Name shall remain under the sun among the posterities which shall be blessed through him ; and all the heathen shall praise him.

⁽⁷⁾ Zechariah, ix. 10.

⁽⁹⁾ The spiritual blessings of the Gospel

⁽⁸⁾ Gen. iii. 14 ; Isaiah, lxy. part of 25 ; are here shadowed forth.
lx. 1 and 6.

18. Blessed be the Lord God, even the God of Israel, which only doeth wondrous things ;

19. And blessed be the Name of his Majesty for ever ; and all the earth shall be filled with his Majesty. Amen, Amen.

O blessed Jesus, whose Divine Spirit, descending into the hearts of thy faithful people, is, as it were, like showers of rain falling upon the mown grass, be pleased by the ministry of thy word by the Church, to extend thy blessings and dominion to the uttermost parts of the earth. Make thy servants, the people of this nation, whom thou hast blessed with extensive temporal power over the heathen, to be humble instruments of publishing the glad tidings of peace and salvation to those who, as yet, have not known thy Name ; that all the earth may be filled with the majesty of thy glory ; that all idolatry may cease for ever, and the hearts of all people be turned unto thee ; that thou mayest become their God, enduing their minds with a lively hope, invigorating their understandings to the full assurance of faith, so that they may live in this world under the guidance of thy good Spirit, and at their departing hence may be received into mansions of everlasting felicity. Grant this, O merciful Father, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

FEBRUARY.

JUNE.

OCTOBER.

}

PSALM LXXIII.

The Psalm before us, like the 37th, describes the vain shew, the short prosperity, and the miserable end, of the wicked ; and it shews how, for want of a firm trust and sure confidence in God, we may put a wrong construction upon his dispensations to man in his present state. By entering the sanctuary of God, the Psalmist declares that his understanding was enlightened ; and so will ours be, if we diligently, and with humble minds, consult God's Holy Word ; for then he will guide us with his counsel, and after that receive us with glory. The Psalmist, you will observe, entertained the same confident hope of a future state of bliss that Job did, which hope supported the latter through all the trials with which it pleased God to visit him.

1. Truly God is loving unto Israel, even unto such as are of a clean heart.¹

2. Nevertheless, my feet were almost gone ; my treadings had well-nigh slipped.

⁽¹⁾ This persuasion alone should silence all mistrust.

3. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

4. For they are in no peril of death, but are lusty and strong.

5. They come in no misfortune like other folk ; neither are they plagued like other men.

6. And this is the cause that they are so holden with pride, and overwhelmed with cruelty.²

7. Their eyes swell with fatness, and they do even what they lust.

8. They corrupt other, and speak of wicked blasphemy : their talking is against the Most High.

9. For they stretch forth their mouth unto the heaven, and their tongue goeth through the world.

10. Therefore fall the people unto them ; and thereout suck they no small advantage.

11. Tush, say they, how should God perceive it : is there knowledge in the Most High ?

12. Lo, these are the ungodly, these prosper in the world, and these have riches in possession ; and I said, Then have I cleansed my heart in vain, and washed mine hands in innocency.

13 & 14. All the day long have I been punished, and chastened every morning ; yea, and I had almost said even as they ; but lo ! then I should have condemned the generation of thy children.³

15 & 16. Then thought I to understand this, but it was too hard for me, until I went into the

(²) We see here the grievous effects of prosperity when not accompanied by a thorough sense of the responsibility it entails.

(³) By condemning the generation of God's children, the Psalmist perhaps

meant, " that he should have been instrumental to their delusion," or should have practically censured that faith on God, which had saved his children from putting an improper construction upon God's dealings with them.

sanctuary of God ; then understood I the end of these men.

17 & 18. Namely, how thou dost set them in slippéry places, and castest them down, and destroyest them. Oh, how suddenly do they consume, perish, and come to a fearful end !

19. Yea, even like as a dream when one awaketh, so shalt thou make their image to vanish out of the city.

20 & 21. Thus my heart was grieved, and it went even through my reins ; so foolish was I, and ignorant, even as a beast, before thee.

22 & 23. Nevertheless, I am alway by thee, for thou hast holden me by my right hand ; thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and after that receive me with glory.

24. Whom have I in heaven but thee ; and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee.

25. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

26. For lo ! they that forsake thee shall perish : thou hast destroyed all them that commit fornication against thee.⁴

27. But it is good for me to hold me fast by God, to put my trust in the Lord God ; and to speak of all thy works in the gates of the daughter of Sion.

⁽⁴⁾ The Church is often spoken of as the wife or bride of the Lord. Offences against God are therefore often described as fornication, more especially the offence of idolatry.

O Lord God, who art loving unto all such as are of a clean heart, and of a contrite spirit, grant that we may not be holden with pride, nor prone to cruelty, nor given to foolish talking; but let our praise be of thee, and of all thy wondrous works. O God, most high, give unto us such religious and mortified affections, that we may never thirst after the temporal advantages and prosperities of the wicked. Set not our feet in slippery places, lest we be suddenly cast down, and have our portion in the lot of the wicked, who perish and come to a fearful end. Guide us with thy counsel, that we, holding ourselves fast by thee, and putting our trust in thee, O God, thou mayest be the strength of our hearts, the hope of our souls, and the ground of all our confidence, that so, when this life is ended, thou mayest receive us to glory, for the sake and through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FEBRUARY. }
JUNE. }
OCTOBER. } PSALM LXXIV.

This Psalm must have been written after the destruction of Solomon's temple, and the desecration of the Holy City by the Chaldeans. Israel, as a nation, was typically (what true Christians are really) the sheep of God's pasture, his purchased congregation, and ransomed inheritance: an appeal is, therefore, made to God for protection—his former mercies are called to mind—his covenant is spoken of, and the perpetual evidences of his goodness to mankind, as displayed in the vicissitudes of the seasons, and the alternations of day and night, are brought forward as grounds of confidence, that he only waiteth to be gracious unto those who call upon him. In times of persecution and of trouble, let us pray without ceasing: the prayer of a righteous man availeth much, and that Almighty Being, without whose permission not even a sparrow falleth to the ground, may see fit to grant to the earnest entreaties of his people that deliverance which neither the wealth nor the power of man can procure for himself.

1. O God, wherefore art thou absent from us so long ; why is thy wrath so hot against the sheep of thy pasture ?

2. O think upon thy congregation, whom thou hast purchased and redeemed of old.

3. Think upon the tribe of thine inheritance ; and Mount Sion, wherein thou hast dwelt.

4. Lift up thy feet, that thou mayest utterly destroy every enemy which hath done evil in thy sanctuary.

5. Thine adversaries roar in the midst of thy congregations, and set up their banners for tokens.

6 & 7. He that hewed timber afore out of the thick trees, was known to bring it to an excellent work ; but now they break down all the carved work thereof with axes and hammers.¹

8. They have set fire upon thy holy places, and have defiled the dwelling-place of thy Name, even unto the ground.

9. Yea, they said in their hearts, Let us make havoc of them altogether ; thus have they burnt up all the houses of God in the land.

10. We see not our tokens : there is not one prophet more, no not one is there among us that understandeth any more.

11. O God, how long shall the adversary do this dishonour ; how long shall the enemy blaspheme thy Name, for ever ?²

(1) It had been thought an employment of much honour and merit, to cut down and prepare timber for the sanctuary, but now, he that doeth most havoc, is most praised.

(2) The reproaches and blasphemies which insulting idolaters incessantly poured out against God and his worshippers, were the principal cause of the complaint of his people.

12. Why withdrawest thou thy hand; why pluckest thou not thy right hand out of thy bosom to consume the enemy?

13. For God is my King of old: the help that is done upon earth, he doeth it himself.

14. Thou didst divide the sea through thy power: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.

15. Thou smotest the heads of Leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat for the people in the wilderness.³

16. Thou broughtest out fountains and waters out of the hard rocks; thou driedst up mighty waters.

17 & 18. The day is thine, and the night is thine; thou hast prepared the light and the sun: thou hast set all the borders of the earth; thou hast made summer and winter.

19. Remember this, O Lord, how the enemy hath rebuked, and how the foolish people hath blasphemed thy Name.

20 & 21. O deliver not the soul of thy turtle dove unto the multitude of the enemies;⁴ and forget not the congregation of the poor for ever: look upon the covenant, for all the earth is full of darkness, and cruel habitations.

22. O let not the simple go away asahmed, but let the poor and needy give praise unto thy Name.

23. Arise, O God, maintain thine own cause; remember how the foolish man blasphemeth thee daily.

(³) Pharaoh is here spoken of as the Leviathan.

(⁴) The Church is spoken of under the beautiful image of the turtle dove of Christ.

24. Forget not the voice of thine enemies ; the presumption of them that hate thee increaseth ever more and more.

O blessed Jesus, who dost sometimes think fit to call thy faithful servants to bear their cross for thy sake, and dost sometimes afflict thy Church, that thou mayest thereby cleanse her from iniquity ; prepare us, we most humbly beseech thee, to bear with meekness and submission the decrees of thy almighty wisdom. Give us grace to live according to the rules of our most holy faith, that we may have courage and comfort in suffering for it, if such be thy good pleasure. Enable us to trust in thy goodness, for support and deliverance, and to fix our minds steadfastly on those heavenly joys with which the sufferings of this world are not worthy to be compared, that when thou shalt appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto thee in thine eternal kingdom, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

FEBRUARY. }
JUNE. } PSALMS LXXV. & LXXVI.
OCTOBER. }

The first verse of the 75th Psalm is spoken in the name of the people addressing their praises to God for his mercies. The remainder of it appears spoken in the person of the Messiah, who declares, that in the appointed season, he will execute righteous judgment. He reminds those who foolishly trust in their own strength, that it is God who putteth down one and setteth up another, and that from his cup he dispenses blessings upon the righteous, and tribulation upon the ungodly. The 76th Psalm appears to have been a tribute of praise to God for the deliverance of his chosen people, by the destruction of Sennacherib's army before Jerusalem. What is valour, or strength, or the wisdom of this world, against the Almighty? Safe and happy are the people who have the Lord for their God: to him let each of us as individuals vow and pay the reverential tribute of an humble and a grateful heart, praying that he would restrain the powers of darkness, and not suffer sin to have dominion over us.

PSALM LXXV.

1 & 2. Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, yea, unto thee do we give thanks; thy Name also is so nigh, and that do thy wondrous works declare.

3. When I receive the congregation, I shall judge according unto right.

4. The earth is weak, and all the inhabitants thereof: I bear up the pillars of it.

5. I said unto the fools, Deal not so madly; and to the ungodly, Set not up your horn.¹

6. Set not up your horn on high, and speak not with a stiff neck.

7 & 8. For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor yet from the south: and why? God is the Judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

9. For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full mixed, and he poureth out of the same.

10. As for the dregs thereof, all the ungodly of the earth shall drink them, and suck them out.

11. But I will talk of the God of Jacob, and praise him for ever.

12. All the horns of the ungodly also will I break, and the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

PSALM LXXVI.

1 & 2. In Jewry is God known; his Name is

⁽¹⁾ The horn is used as an emblem of power.

great in Israel : at Salem is his tabernacle, and his dwelling in Sion.

3. There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the battle.

4. Thou art of more honour and might than the hills of the robbers.

5. The stout-hearted are spoiled ; they have slept their sleep, and none of the men of might have found their hands.

6. At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are fallen.

7. Thou, even thou art to be feared ; and who may stand in thy sight when thou art angry ?

8 & 9. Thou didst cause thy judgment to be heard from heaven : the earth trembled, and was still, when God arose to judgment, and to help all the meek upon earth.

10. The fierceness of man shall turn to thy praise, and the fierceness of them shalt thou refrain.

11. Promise unto the Lord your God, and keep it, all ye that are round about him : bring presents unto Him that ought to be feared.

12. He shall refrain the spirit of princes, and is wonderful among the kings of the earth.

O Lord God, the Judge of all the world, from whom cometh all promotion and all punishment, have mercy upon us now, and at the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, when thou shalt judge all the congregations of

men and angels according unto right. O give us grace to await thy coming in all humility and charity, that we be not stiff-necked and exalted in our own opinions and conceptions, but may submit to thy yoke with meekness and obedience, that when thou shalt pour forth the cup of vengeance upon the ungodly, we may not drink or taste the dregs thereof, but may sit down at thy table, and be satisfied with the blessings of eternity, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FEBRUARY.	}	PSALM LXXVII.
JUNE.		
OCTOBER.		

This Psalm was probably composed during the captivity of the children of Israel in Babylon. It contains a complaint of sufferings; and in it we see the workings of a mind at first distrustful, but enabled, by looking back upon past mercies, to view the dispensations of Providence in a juster light. Recollection of former mercies is the best preservative against unjust complaint when grief becomes our portion. The way of God is holy; his footsteps are not known; and as we see, that under the

first covenant he led his people like sheep by the hands of Moses and Aaron, so let us rest assured, that unto those who have been "bought with a price," and are thus become, under the second covenant, the ransomed of the Lord, he will give the help of his grace, and establish with his free Spirit, all who earnestly pray to him for the same.

1. I will cry unto God with my voice, even unto God will I cry with my voice, and he shall hearken unto me.

2. ¹In the time of my trouble I sought the Lord ; my sore ran, and ceased not in the night season ; my soul refused comfort.

3. When I am in heaviness, I will think upon God ; when my heart is vexed, I will complain.

4. ²Thou holdest mine eyes waking ; I am so feeble that I cannot speak.

5 and 6. I have considered the days of old, and the years that are past ; I call to remembrance my song, and in the night I commune with mine own heart, and search out my spirits.

7 and 8. ³Will the Lord absent himself for ever, and will he be no more entreated ? Is his mercy clean gone for ever, and is his promise come utterly to an end for evermore ?

(¹) The captive in Babylon mourns his continued absence from the Holy City, where dwelt the God of his love. So also St Paul, who expressed his willingness to be absent from the body, that he might be present with the Lord.

(²) Through grief and anxiety sleepless nights are produced.

(³) Such is the Psalmist's meditation, wherein his faith replies to the doubts which his present calamities had temporarily raised in his mind.

9. Hath God forgotten to be gracious, and will he shut up his loving-kindness in displeasure?

10. And I said, It is mine own infirmity ; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most Highest.

11. I will remember the works of the Lord, and call to mind thy wonders of old time.

12. I will think also of all thy works, and my talking shall be of thy doings.

13. Thy way, O God, is holy : who is so great a God as our God ?

14. Thou art the God that doeth wonders, and hast declared thy power among the people.

15. Thou hast mightily delivered thy people, even the sons of Jacob and Joseph.

16. The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee and were afraid ; the depths also were troubled.

17. The clouds poured out water, the air thundered, and thine arrows went abroad.

18. The voice of thy thunder was heard round about ; the lightnings shone upon the ground ; the earth was moved and shook withal.

19. Thy way is in the sea, and thy paths in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.

20. Thou leddest thy people like sheep, by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

O God, who doest wonders, and hast declared thy almighty power most chiefly in shewing mercy and pity, let the experience of thy

loving-kindness in times past make such deep impression on our hearts and memories, that when we are in heaviness we may think upon thee, and in the midst of our calamities may address ourselves unto thee. Give us grace, O God, to know, that in chastening us, thou dealest with us as with sons, and only waitest to be gracious when thy children cry unto thee; and should it be thy good pleasure to try us in the furnace of affliction, or to lay trouble and heaviness upon our loins, O do thou so strengthen us with thy power in the inner man, that we may never be mistrustful of thy gracious care of us, but may be endued with a meek and patient submission to thy divine will, knowing, that if we faint not, thou wilt in due season bring us out of trouble into a land of everlasting rest and comfort, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FEBRUARY.

JUNE.

OCTOBER.

PART OF

PSALM LXXVIII.

The account of God's dealings with his people, celebrated in this Psalm, begins with the law or testimony, appointed and established

in Israel by the hand of Moses. Under these names are comprehended not only the precepts and ceremonies, but the several transactions to which they referred, and in commemoration of which they were instituted, as also that future salvation to which they, as well as the transactions, had an aspect. Thus the Passover, for instance, looked forward to the Redemption by the Messiah. The Law, thus considered as involving the Gospel within it, was, to pious Israelites, the fountain of wisdom and source of delight. They were to meditate therein day and night, and to teach it to their children, and their children's children. And the same reason for the commandment thus given to them in respect to the Law, holds in our case with respect to the Gospel ; namely,—that the chosen people, renouncing the world, with its idols and lusts, should believe, and set their hope, in the true God and only Saviour, and not forget the work which he hath wrought for their redemption. Let the Christian, who perhaps is amazed at the frequent rebellions of stiff-necked Israel, reflect within himself on the extent of his own forgetfulness of his baptismal covenant ; he must then acknowledge the goodness of God in causing these things to be written for our admonition, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things, but walk soberly, in the fear of God, and in the keeping of his commandments.

1. Hear my law, O my people ; incline your ears unto the words of my mouth.

2 and 3. ¹I will open my mouth in a parable ; I will declare hard sentences of old, which we have heard, and known, and such as our fathers have told us ;

4. That we should not hide them from the children of the generations to come ; but to shew the honour of the Lord, his mighty and wonderful works that he hath done.

5 and 6. He made a covenant with Jacob, and gave Israel a law, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children ; that their posterity might know it, and the children which were yet unborn.

7 and 8. To the intent, that when they came up, they might shew their children the same ; that they might put their trust in God, and not to forget the works of God, but to keep his commandments ;

9. And not to be as their forefathers, a faithless generation, a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit cleaveth not steadfastly unto God ;

10. Like as the children of Ephraim, who, being harnessed, and carrying bows, turned themselves back in the day of battle.²

11 and 12. They kept not the covenant of God, and would not walk in his law, but forgat what he

(¹) See 1 Cor. x. 11. The facts here related being types or representations of other facts, and comprehending instruction and admonition for future times, are considered by the Psalmist in the light of parables.

(²) The cowardice of Ephraim, when prepared for battle, must have arisen from want of trust in God. Let the Christian soldier, mindful of his own frailty, put on *the whole armour of God*.

had done, and the wonderful works that he had shewed for them.

13. Marvellous things did he in the sight of our forefathers, in the land of Egypt, even in the field of Zoan.

14. He divided the sea, and let them go through; he made the waters to stand on an heap.³

15. In the day time also he led them with a cloud, and all the night through with a light of fire.

16. He clave the hard rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink thereof, as it had been out of the great depth.

17. He brought waters out of the stony rock,⁴ so that it gushed out like the rivers.

18. Yet for all this they sinned more against him, and provoked the Most Highest in the wilderness.

O Almighty God, who, in thy wonderful doings for thy people Israel, didst foreshew the still greater miracles which thou hast wrought for all them that believe on thy Son's name, vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to direct, sanctify, and govern both our hearts and minds in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments. Take from us, O God, all hardness of heart, all contempt of thy word, and so

³ (3) This miracle has been considered as a type of our Christian baptism, and as containing in it the mysteries of our resurrection to a state of grace here, and of our passage through the grave to the glorious inheritance of our heavenly Canaan.

(4) Which rock represented Christ. 1 Cor. x. 4.

bring into subjection all our unruly wills and affections, that we may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise. Endue us, O God, with such unbounded trust and confidence in thee, that in times of adversity or affliction, we fall not from our steadfastness, but may have power to resist all the evil insinuations of Satan, and to hold us fast by thee. May thy wonderful works of grace and mercy be ever present to our minds, and may the glorious hopes thou hast set before us animate us in all our conflicts with our spiritual adversaries. And grant, O God, that being made more than conquerors through him that loved us, we may, through his merits, be made partakers of his joys ; and this we humbly beg in the name, and through the mediation of the same our blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

 JUNE.

OCTOBER.

}

CONTINUATION OF

PSALM LXXVIII.

Bishop Horne observes, “that the Psalms are an epitome of the Bible, adapted to the

purposes of devotion.” And certainly this remark applies with peculiar force to the Psalm now before us, having respect to passages in the Old Testament, which are applied both by our Saviour and his Apostles in the New Testament, to prove the sacramental nature of God’s dealings with Israel, and that Christ was the true bread of life, typified by the manna in the wilderness. We are here taught the great sin of murmuring against God ; and seeing that such murmurs, growing out of infidelity, drew down, not only immediate vengeance, but the permanent exclusion of a whole race from the promised land, let us, my fellow Christians, take heed to our ways, lest we come short of the glory of God, and fail to obtain that inheritance in the heavenly Canaan, purchased for us by the blood of Christ.

19. They tempted God in their hearts ; and required meat for their lusts.

20 and 21. They spake against God also, saying, Shall God prepare a table in the wilderness ? He smote the stony rock indeed, that the waters gushed out, and the streams flowed withal ; but can he give bread also, or provide flesh for his people ?⁵

22 and 23. When the Lord heard this, he was

⁽⁵⁾ Infidelity was the cause of those discontents which drew down the heavy displeasure of God ; and although he was pleased to testify his power by gratifying their lusts, yet we see that inordinate desires, though sometimes complied with, do not therefore go unpunished.

wroth ; so the fire was kindled in Jacob, and there came up heavy displeasure against Israel, because they believed not in God, and put not their trust in his help.

24 and 25. So he commanded the clouds above, and opened the doors of heaven : he rained down manna also upon them for to eat, and gave them food from heaven.⁶

26. So man did eat angels' food ;⁷ for he sent them meat enough.

27. He caused the east wind to blow under heaven ; and through his power he brought in the south-west wind.

28. He rained flesh upon them as thick as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea.

29 and 30. He let it fall among their tents, even round about their habitation ; so they did eat and were well filled, for he gave them their own desire ; they were not disappointed of their lust.

31. But while the meat was yet in their mouths, the heavy wrath of God came upon them, and slew the wealthiest of them : yea, and smote down the chosen men that were in Israel.

32 and 33. But for all this they sinned yet more, and believed not his wondrous works ; therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble.⁸

34 and 35. When he slew them, they sought him, and turned them early, and inquired after God ; and they remembered that God was their strength, and that the high God was their redeemer.

(⁶) See John, vi. 31 and 35, and 47 to 58.

(⁸) Mercies are followed by provocations, and fresh provocations draw down

(⁷) Or bread, fit to support the mightiest of men.

fresh judgments. See Jude, 15. 16.

36 and 37. Nevertheless, they did but flatter him with their mouth, and dissembled with him in their tongue; for their heart was not whole with him, neither continued they steadfast in his covenant.

38. and 39. But he was so merciful, that he forgave their misdeeds, and destroyed them not; yea, many a time turned he his wrath away, and would not suffer his whole displeasure to arise.⁹

40. For he considered that they were but flesh; and that they were even a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.

O Lord God omnipotent, who didst deliver thy chosen people Israel from the bondage of Egypt, and didst wonderfully preserve them by thy presence; thou God, who didst feed them in the wilderness with bread from heaven, and didst give them drink from the rock; thou God, who didst punish the generation that rebelled against thee, and yet, mindful of thy covenant and of the frailty of man, didst many a time turn thy wrath away, and wouldst not suffer thy whole displeasure to arise: O be thou graciously pleased to defend us, thy ransomed people, by thy mighty power, from the assaults of our spiritual enemies; to nourish our souls with the bread of life, and to give us drink of that Rock from whence flowed the

(⁹) See Romans, ii. 1 to 11.

blood and water of our redemption. And grant, O gracious God, that our hearts may be set aright, that our spirits may cleave unto thee ; that, being steadfast in faith, and joyful through hope, we may always abound in the works of thy laws, and may be immoveably fixed in the observance of thy statutes. And when, through infirmity, we fall, O suffer not thy vengeance to consume us ; but let thy loving correction call us home, that we may not have our portion with the impenitent, but may be numbered with the flock of the true Israel, and be admitted into the fold of the heavenly shepherd, Jesus Christ ; to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.


 OCTOBER. } CONTINUATION OF
 PSALM LXXVIII.

We must bear in mind the object which the Psalmist declared he had in view in recounting to the people the various instances of God's providential interference on their behalf, namely, That they might put their trust in God, and not to forget the works of God, but to keep his commandments ; and not to be, as

their forefathers, a faithless and stubborn generation,—a generation that set not their hearts aright, and whose spirit cleaveth not steadfastly unto God. Rebellion against God will cause even the most favoured nation to be “abhorred” by him, and will induce him to remove from them those spiritual blessings attendant upon an evangelical Church where his Spirit dwelleth. The call of David from a sheepfold to a throne, teacheth us, that he who hath shewed himself faithful in a few things is accounted worthy of exaltation, though he may, like David, and like the blessed Son of David, enter through sufferings into glory.

41 and 42. Many a time did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieved him in the desert : they turned back and tempted God, and moved the Holy One in Israel.

43 and 44. They thought not of his hand, and of the day when he delivered them from the hand of the enemy ; how he had wrought his miracles in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan.

45. ¹⁰He turned their waters into blood, so that they might not drink of the rivers.

46. He sent lice among them, and devoured them up, and frogs to destroy them.

47. He gave their fruit unto the caterpillar, and their labour unto the grasshopper.

⁽¹⁰⁾ The plagues of Egypt were of a nature which had reference to the peculiar idolatry of that people, and were intended to evince the superiority of Jehovah over the powers of nature.

48. He destroyed their vines with hailstones, and their mulberry trees with the frost.

49. He smote their cattle also with hailstones, and their flocks with hot thunderbolts.

50. He cast upon them the furiousness of his wrath, anger, displeasure, and trouble, and sent evil angels among them.

51. He made a way to his indignation, and spared not their soul from death ; but gave their life over to the pestilence ;

52. And smote all the first-born in Egypt ; the most principal and mightiest in the dwellings of Ham.

53. But as for his own people, he led them forth like sheep, and carried them in the wilderness like a flock.

54. He brought them out safely, that they should not fear, and overwhelmed their enemies with the sea.

55. And brought them within the borders of his sanctuary, even to his mountain, which he purchased with his right hand.

56. He cast out the heathen also before them ; caused their land to be divided among them for an heritage, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.

57 and 58. So they tempted and displeased the most high God, and kept not his testimonies ; but turned their backs, and fell away like their forefathers, starting aside like a broken bow.

59. For they grieved him with their hill altars, and provoked him to displeasure with their images.

60 and 61. When God heard this, he was wroth, and took sore displeasure at Israel ; so that he

forsook the tabernacle in Silo, even the tent that he had pitched among men.¹¹

62 and 63. He delivered their power into captivity, and their beauty into the enemy's hand. He gave his people over also unto the sword, and was wroth with his inheritance.

64. The fire consumed their young men ; and their maidens were not given to marriage.

65. Their priests were slain with the sword ; and there were no widows to make lamentation.

66 and 67. So the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a giant refreshed with wine. He smote his enemies in the hinder parts, and put them to a perpetual shame.

68 and 69. He refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim ; but chose the tribe of Judah, even the hill of Zion which he loved.

70. And there he built his temple on high, and laid the foundation of it like the ground which he hath made continually.

71 and 72. He chose David also his servant, and took him away from the sheep-folds. As he was following the ewes great with young ones, he took him, that he might feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.

73. So he fed them with a faithful and true heart, and ruled them prudently with all his power.

O Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men, grant

⁽¹¹⁾ God suffered the ark to be taken by the Philistines.

unto thy people that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise, that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Lord, who never failest to help and govern them whom thou dost bring up in thy steadfast fear and love, keep us, we beseech thee, under the protection of thy good providence, and make us to have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

MARCH.

JULY.

NOVEMBER.

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PSALM LXXIX.

Holy Scripture is profitable for reproof and instruction in righteousness. Behold Israel punished for apostacy when they withdrew their worship from the true God. He permitted heathens to defile their temple, to devastate their city, to slay the people, and to carry away captive the small remnant which, in remembrance of his everlasting covenant

with faithful Abraham, were saved from the slaughter. Hence let us learn how fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God. It is good for us as a nation to hold us fast by God, to enjoy prosperity with meekness, and to bow with submission to his chastening hand, whenever he sees fit to afflict us. Let the example of Manasseh, as related in 2 Chron. xxxiii. be before us, who, when suffering under God's wrath, besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him ; and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem unto his kingdom : then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God.

1. O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance :¹ thy holy temple have they defiled, and made Jerusalem an heap of stones.

2. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the air, and the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the land.

3. Their blood have they shed like water on every side of Jerusalem, and there was no man to bury them.

4. We are become an open shame to our enemies ; a very scorn and derision unto them that are round about us.²

⁽¹⁾ Every redeemed soul is the inheritance of God ; when sin enters, the inheritance is defiled.

⁽²⁾ The only real disgrace of religion is the wickedness of its professors.

5. Lord, how long wilt thou be angry : shall thy jealousy burn like fire for ever ?

6. Pour out thine indignation upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy Name.³

7. For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling-place.

8. O remember not our old sins, but have mercy upon us, and that soon, for we are come to great misery.

9. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy Name : O deliver us, and be merciful unto our sins, for thy Name's sake.

10. Wherefore do the heathen say, Where is now their God ?

11. O let the vengeance of thy servants' blood that is shed, be openly shewed upon the heathen in our sight.

12. O let the sorrowful sighing of the prisoners come before thee : according to the greatness of thy power, preserve thou those that are appointed to die.⁴

13. And for the blasphemy wherewith our neighbours have blasphemed thee, reward thou them, O Lord, seven-fold into their bosom.

14. So we, that are thy people, and sheep of thy pasture, shall give thee thanks for ever, and will always be shewing forth thy praise, from generation to generation.

⁽³⁾ This verse, which appears a prayer, must be considered rather as a prediction. The Church, for her sins, may deserve to suffer, but her enemies will, nevertheless, perish, though, for a while, they may be made instruments of God's wrath.

⁽⁴⁾ The Christian forgets not that he is often led captive by his own desires, and bound in the chain of his sins.

Prayer.

Almighty God, who hast not abandoned us to the dim light of our own reason, but hast been graciously pleased to reveal to us in the holy Scriptures whatever is necessary for us to believe and practise in order to our eternal salvation ; grant that we may, with care and diligence, apply ourselves to the reading of the sacred volume ; and do thou open our eyes that we may see the wondrous things of thy law. Let us peruse thy holy word with that reverence which is due to thy gracious dispensations, with an entire submission of our understandings to thy divine authority, and with a sincere and steadfast resolution of mind to govern our lives by the maxims of thy holy Gospel, and to obey thy blessed will in all things. Let thy precious promises quicken our obedience, and thy threatenings deter us from sin, that so, through the mercies of our gracious Redeemer, we may be made partakers of everlasting joy in the world to come, through the same our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

MARCH. }
JULY. }
NOVEMBER. } PSALM LXXX.

The former exaltation of God's people, who composed the Hebrew Church, and their state of depression when this Psalm was written, are beautifully described under the figure of a vine. The vine is a plant needing support, and when supported it is wide-spreading and luxuriant ; capable of producing, under good culture, the most delicious fruit ; but, if barren, the most unprofitable of trees. In all these respects it is a lively emblem of the Church. And let us Christians receive instruction from the depressed state of the Hebrew Church as described in this Psalm. Greater mercies, and more excellent gifts, have been vouchsafed to the Christian Church, and should call forth greater thankfulness and more excellent virtues ; otherwise they will serve only to aggravate her guilt and multiply her sorrows. If her doctrines be perverted and her practice corrupted, some infidel power may be unchained against her, as the minister of God's vengeance.

1 & 2. Hear, O thou Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep ; shew thyself also, thou that sittest upon the cherubims, before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasses ;¹ stir up thy strength and come and help us.

3. Turn us again, O God ; shew the light of thy countenance, and we shall be whole.

4. O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry with thy people that prayeth ?²

5. Thou feedest them with the bread of tears, and givest them plenteousness of tears to drink.

6. Thou hast made us a very strife unto our neighbours, and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

7. Turn us again, thou God of hosts ; shew the light of thy countenance, and we shall be whole.

8. Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt : thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.

9. Thou madest room for it ; and when it had taken root, it filled the land.

10. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedar trees.

11. She stretched out her branches unto the sea, and her boughs unto the river.³

12. Why hast thou then broken down her hedge, that all they that go by pluck off her grapes ?

13. The wild boar out of the wood doth root it up, and the wild beasts of the field devour it.

⁽¹⁾ When the Israelites journeyed in the wilderness, these three tribes followed next after the ark. God, and hide his face from them that he will not hear." Isaiah, lix. 2.

⁽²⁾ The sins of a people may, for a time, "separate between them and their earth was the land of promise.

14. Turn thee again, thou God of hosts, look down from heaven : behold, and visit this vine ;

15. And the place of the vineyard that thy right hand hath planted ; and the branch that thou madest so strong for thyself.

16. It is burnt with fire, and cut down ; and they[†] shall perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.

17. Let thy hand be upon the Man of thy right hand, and upon the Son of man, whom thou madest so strong for thine own self.

18. And so will not we go back from thee : O let us live, and we shall call upon thy Name.

19. Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts : shew the light of thy countenance, and we shall be whole.

O thou Shepherd of Israel, thou that sittest between the cherubims, stir up thy strength, and come and help us. Be pleased to shew the light of thy countenance upon us, and let the bright beams of thy favour illumine thy Holy Church. Let her not become a prey to those who would spoil her, and pluck off her grapes ; but hedge her about, O God, with thy mercies, and let her flourish under the shadow of thy protection ; that she may take root downwards, and bear fruit upwards ; that she may spread, and fill, and become the glory of all lands : that all heathens may come to a

^(†) " And they," means the despoilers of God's vineyard—the Church.

knowledge of thy salvation, and the Name of Christ be magnified throughout the world. And to us, O God, grant that we may not go back from thee, but may hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. And this we beg for the sake of Jesus Christ our Redeemer and Advocate. Amen.

MARCH.

JULY.

NOVEMBER.

} PSALMS LXXXI. & LXXXII.

The eighty-second Psalm is a charge given by the Spirit of God to all magistrates, much like that which King Jehoshaphat gave to his judges, saying, "Take heed what ye do, for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment." In the eighty-first Psalm, Jehovah expostulates with his people, who are excited by the Psalmist to give the honour due unto his Name. Who is there amongst us who delights to enter into the Lord's house, to pour forth his praises with a thankful recollection of his mercies towards us, whether as a nation, as a family, or as individuals? Who is there amongst us that hails

the return of the Sabbath morn with a sanctified joy, with a reverential delight, as a more especial opportunity of sacred communion with God? Thrice happy are they who thus prepare themselves for the joys of heaven; whose minds are stayed on God in this world; and who regard him not merely as their present support, but look forward to an eternal abode with him as their exceeding, their everlasting, and very great reward.

PSALM LXXXI.

1. Sing we merrily unto God our strength, make a cheerful noise unto the God of Jacob.

2 & 3. Take the psalm, bring hither the tabret, the merry harp, with the lute. Blow up the trumpet¹ in [or at the time of] the new moon, even in the time appointed, and upon our solemn feast day.

4 & 5. For this was made a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob. This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when he came out of the land of Egypt; where I² heard a language that I understood not.

6. ³I removed his shoulder from the burden; his hands were delivered from the pots.

(¹) In the Jewish Church, notice was given of Feasts and Fasts by sound of trumpet. All the new moons, or beginnings of months, were observed in this manner, particularly on the first day of the seventh month, which was kept as a great festival in commemoration of God's deliverance of his people from Egyptian bondage.

(²) There is here a striking change of person—Jehovah speaks.

(³) God is here the speaker. He reminds Israel of their redemption, and of his power to supply all their wants, as had been proved by the waters of Meribah when he smote the rock.

7 & 8. Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee ; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder ; I proved thee at the waters of Meribah.

9. Hear, O my people, and I will assure thee, O Israel ; if thou wilt hearken unto me,

10 & 11. There shall no strange God be in thee, neither shalt thou worship any other God. I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt ; open thy mouth wide, and I shall fill it.

12 & 13. But my people would not hear my voice, and Israel would not obey me : so I gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts, and let them follow their own imaginations.

14 & 15. O that my people would have hearkened unto me ; for if Israel had walked in my ways, I should soon have put down their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries.⁴

16. The haters of the Lord should have been found liars : but their time should have endured for ever.⁵

17. He should have fed them also with the finest wheat-flour ; and with honey out of the stony rock should I have satisfied thee.

PSALM LXXXII.

1. God standeth in the congregation of princes :¹ he is a judge among gods.

⁽¹⁾ Such are the tender mercies of God, that he is not only careful to provide for us the means of salvation, but represents himself as mourning over the frowardness of his children.

obedience it is that Christ becomes to us the Bread of Life and the Rock of salvation—our present help—our future hope.

⁽²⁾ God is present among those whom he hath invested with temporal power.

⁽³⁾ Upon the conditions of faith and

2. How long will ye give wrong judgment, and accept the persons of the ungodly ?

3. Defend the poor and fatherless ; see that such as are in need and necessity have right.

4. Deliver the outcast and poor ; save them from the hand of the ungodly.

5. They will not be learned nor understand, but walk on still in darkness : all the foundations of the earth are out of course.²

6 & 7. I have said, Ye are gods, and ye are all the children of the Most Highest ; but ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.³

8. Arise, O God, and judge thou the earth ; for thou shalt take all heathen to thine inheritance.

O Lord God our strength, whose mercies are infinite, and whose majesty is glorious, enlarge our hearts with a worthy conception of thy goodness, and enable us with our lips to give suitable expression of thy praise : and since the sacrifice of righteousness is that in which thou delightest, enable us, we beseech thee, to walk before thee in humility, and in strict obedience to thy laws. Give us not over, O God, to our own heart's lusts ; neither let us follow our own imaginations, but grant that we may be enabled

(2) When rulers, magistrates, and governors, depart from serving the Living God, the foundations of society are out of course.

(3) High and low, rich and poor, all shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

to maintain a successful conflict with our great adversary—to cast away the works of darkness, and to walk in the spirit of the new man, which is created after thy likeness, in righteousness and true holiness. O Lord, we beseech thee to bless the Queen and all that are put in authority under her, that she, knowing whose minister she is, may above all things seek thy honour and glory, and that those who are put in authority may truly and impartially administer justice, to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and to the maintenance of thy true religion and virtue. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

MARCH.

JULY.

NOVEMBER.

} PSALM LXXXIII.

Enmity to the holiness and authority of God, and impatience of the restraint which religion imposes upon vice, are the real causes why wicked men, who differ from each other on almost every subject, are brought to combine against the Church. Hypocrites, sceptics, and even enthusiasts, often confederate against

the humbling doctrines of Christianity, and strive to silence the voice of those whose duty it is to denounce their designs. But such wicked persons are vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. God may see fit for a while to keep silence, and as a chastisement designed for the purification of his Church, may permit their evil counsels to succeed to a certain extent ; but, in the end, the unbelieving, and all workers of wickedness, shall be cast into the pit of everlasting destruction. May we so know that he, whose name is Jehovah, is Most High over all the earth, as to fear his wrath, seek his favour, trust his mercy and grace, and yield ourselves to be his willing and devoted servants.

1. 'Keep not thou silence, O God ; hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.

2. For lo ! thine enemies make a tumult ; and they that hate thee have lifted up the head.

3. They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones.²

4. They have said, Come and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.

5. For they have consulted together with one consent : they are confederate against thee.³

(1) The enemies of the Church are the enemies of God. Israel was the figure of the Christian Church. Pilate, who had been at enmity, were made friends on the day when Christ was brought before them. Wicked men

(2) Your life is hid with Christ in God, are ready at all times to combine for the destruction of the Church.

(3) St Luke tells us, that Herod and

6 & 7. The tabernacles of Edom and the Ishmaelites ; of Moab and the Hagarenes ; Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek ; the Philistines, with the inhabitants of Tyre.

8. Assur also is joined with them ; they have holpen the children of Lot.

9 & 10. Do unto them as unto the Midianites ; as to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kison ; which perished at En-dor : they became as dung for the earth.

11 & 12. Make their nobles like Oreb and like Zeeb ; yea, all their princes as Zebah and as Zalmunna : who said, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession.

13 & 14. O my God, make them like a wheel ; as the stubble before the wind. As the fire burneth a wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire :

15. So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm.

16. Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek thy Name, O Lord.

17. Let them be confounded and troubled for ever ; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish.

18. That men may know that thou, whose Name alone is JEHOVAH, art the Most High over all the earth.

O Lord most high, O God most mighty, we pray for the peace of our spiritual Jerusalem—thy Church. Let them prosper that love it ;

and confound, we beseech, the counsels and devices of such as would overthrow it. Endue thy ministers with righteousness, and make thy chosen people joyful. Keep thy household, O Lord, in continual godliness, that it may be devoutly given to serve thee in good works; and grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries may so prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that we may be found hereafter an acceptable people in thy sight, through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

MARCH.

JULY.

NOVEMBER.

} PSALM LXXXIV.

The author of this Psalm laments his captivity in Babylon, as depriving him of the power of resorting to the Lord's house: and who is there now present that can entertain a sincere longing for the eternal presence of God, but must grieve whensoever he is prevented from resorting to the habitation of God's house, and

the place where his honour dwelleth. We are assured that where two or three are gathered together in Christ's Name, there is he in the midst of them ; and we believe in the communion we have with him through the Church, of which he is the head, and we are the members.

1. O how amiable are thy dwellings, thou Lord of hosts !

2. My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord ; my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.

3. Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house, and the swallow a nest, where she may lay her young ; even thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.¹

4. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house : they will be alway praising thee.²

5. Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee ; in whose heart are thy ways.

6. ³Who, going through the vale of misery, use it for a well ; and the pools are filled with water.

7. They will go from strength to strength ; and unto the God of gods appeareth every one of them in Sion.

(¹) It is evidently the design of this passage to intimate to us, that, in the house, and at the altar of God, a faithful soul findeth freedom from care and sorrow, quiet of mind, and gladness of spirit.

(²) Bless'd who, their strength on thee reclined
Thy seat explore with constant mind ;
And Salem's distant towers in view,
With active zeal their way pursue.

(³) In our passage through this world we are refreshed by the streams of Divine grace, flowing from the great fountain of consolation.

8. O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer ; hear-ken, O God of Jacob.

9. Behold, O God, our defender, and look upon the face of thine Anointed.

10. For one day in thy courts is better than a thousand.

11. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness.

12. For the Lord God is a light and defence : the Lord will give grace and worship ; and no good thing shall he withhold from them that live a godly life.

13. O Lord God of hosts, blessed is the man that putteth his trust in thee.

O Lord God of hosts, whose throne is heaven, and whose footstool earth, in whose presence dwell millions of angels and beatified spirits, give us a longing desire to enter into thy courts. Make us to shun the tents of ungodliness ; and during our pilgrimage through this vale of misery, open unto us wells of consolation, in the assurance which thy Holy Word furnishes to us of a happier existence in another world. O God, grant that, in the power of thy Holy Spirit, we may go on from strength to strength. Be thou our light and defence. Support us in all dangers and adversities, that no allurements of the world, no irregular desires, may withdraw us from the

path of life, and no illusions may cause us to fall from our trust in thee ; and so, as we advance in the journey of life, prepare us, O God, to appear in thy presence by an increase of purity, of charity, and of heavenly affections. Grant this, O merciful Father, for the honour of thy dear Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

MARCH.

JULY.

NOVEMBER.

} PSALM LXXXV.

This is one of the proper Psalms for Christmas day. We Christians use it to celebrate our deliverance from the captivity of sin and death, brought upon us by our first parents, and from which we were rescued by the incarnate Son of God. Of this salvation the prophets, among whom was the Psalmist, and in whom was the Spirit of Christ, searched diligently, and testified before-hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. The Gospel is accordingly styled by St Peter, the Word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ ; to him give all the prophets witness, that, through

his Name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. The great attributes of God are mercy and truth. By his word it is declared, the soul that sinneth it shall die : eternal justice must be satisfied before mercy can be shewn. In the giving of his well beloved Son, in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, the only plan of redemption was formed which could reconcile these two attributes of justice and mercy. On him was laid the iniquity of us all ; by his stripes we are healed. He was without sin ; and his perfect righteousness will, according to the divine promise, be imputed to those who believe on him. Hence it is that we have peace ; because it is declared, that without holiness, no man shall see the Lord ; and as we, sinful creatures, are perpetually erring and straying from God's ways, so doth our hope of salvation depend upon the righteousness of Christ being accepted instead of ours. St Paul in his Epistle to Titus, writes thus,—“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

1. Lord, thou art become gracious unto thy land :
thou hast turned away the captivity of Jacob.

2. Thou hast forgiven the offence of thy people,
and covered all their sins.

3. Thou hast taken away all thy displeasure ;
and turned thyself from thy wrathful indignation.

4. Turn us, then, O God our Saviour, and let
thine anger cease from us.

5. Wilt thou be displeased at us for ever ; and
wilt thou stretch out thy wrath from one genera-
tion to another ?

6. Wilt thou not turn again, and quicken us, that
thy people may rejoice in thee ?

7. Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us
thy salvation.

8. I will hearken what the Lord God will say
concerning me : for he shall speak peace unto his
people, and to his saints, that they turn not again
to folly.

9. For his salvation is nigh them that fear him,
that glory may dwell in our land.

10. Mercy and truth are met together ; righteous-
ness and peace have kissed each other.¹

11. Truth shall flourish out of the earth, and
righteousness hath looked down from heaven.

12. Yea, the Lord shall shew loving-kindness,
and our land shall give her increase.

13. Righteousness shall go before him, and shall
set us in the way of his steps.

⁽¹⁾ Let Christians take warning to shew mercy, to speak truth, to do that which is
lawful and just, and to follow peace.

O most gracious God, who art reconciled to us in our Saviour Jesus Christ, having, for his sake, forgiven the offences of thy people, and covered all their sins with the robe of his perfect righteousness, let thy grace convert and quicken us, that we may rejoice in thee and in thy salvation. Endue us, O God, with a lively faith in thy promises, and with ardent love to thee for thy great mercy to mankind in the redemption of the world. And when thou hast spoken peace unto our souls, and reconciled us to thyself in the blood of thy Son, give unto us the grace of perseverance, that we may be steadfast and immoveable, and always abounding in the works of the Lord, that so our labour may not be in vain in the Lord. Hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech thee, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

MARCH.

JULY.

NOVEMBER.

} PSALMS LXXXVI. & LXXXVII.

The 86th Psalm seems eminently calculated for a person under affliction. No Christian

can say properly or justly that he is holy ; but if he be really devoted to the service of Christ, he may use the word in that sense. We are every where in Scripture encouraged to lift up our souls unto God in prayer, because of his great goodness and mercy—because it is he that doeth wondrous things—because he is God alone.

In the 87th Psalm, the prophet foretells and celebrates the stability and felicity of Sion—the accession of the Gentiles to her, and their enrolment among her citizens. He likewise extols her as the fountain of grace and salvation. For the prosperity, therefore, of the Church, we and all the world ought to pray, and while we pray for her with our lips, let it be our care to adorn her by our lives.

PSALM LXXXVI.

1. Bow down thine ear, O Lord, and hear me.
for I am poor, and in misery.¹

2. Preserve thou my soul, for I am holy: my
God, save thy servant that putteth his trust in
thee.

3. Be merciful unto me, O Lord, for I will call
daily upon thee.

4. Comfort the soul of thy servant, for unto thee,
O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

(1) All prayer is founded upon a sense of our own wants, and of God's ability to supply them.

5. For thou, Lord, art good and gracious, and of great mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

6. Give ear, Lord, unto my prayer, and ponder the voice of my humble desires.

7. In the time of my trouble I will call upon thee, for thou hearest me.

8. Among the gods, there is none like unto thee, O Lord; there is not one that can do as thou doest.

9. All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy Name.

10. For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone.

11. Teach me thy ways, O Lord, and I will walk in thy truth: O knit my heart unto thee, that I may fear thy Name.

12. I will thank thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and will praise thy Name for evermore.

13. For great is thy mercy toward me, and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.²

14. O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul, and have not set thee before them.³

15. But thou, O Lord God, art full of compassion and mercy; long-suffering, plenteous in goodness and truth.

16. O turn thee then unto me, and have mercy upon me: give thy strength unto thy servant, and help the son of thine handmaid.

(*) By the death and resurrection of Jesus, we are delivered from the captivity of sin, of death, and of hell.

(3) Haughty and turbulent passions are the enemies of the Christian

17. Shew some token upon me for good, that they who hate me may see it, and be ashamed ; because thou, Lord, hast holpen me, and comforted me.

PSALM LXXXVII.

1. Her foundations are upon the holy hills : the Lord loveth the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.¹

2. Very excellent things are spoken of thee, thou city of God.

3 & 4. I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me : behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia : this man was born there.²

5. And of Sion it shall be reported, that he was born in her, and the Most High shall stablish her.

6. The Lord shall rehearse it, when he writeth up the people, that he was born there.³

7. As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there : all my springs are in thee.⁴

O Lord God, good and gracious, and of great mercy unto all them that call upon thee, give ear unto our prayers, and ponder the voice

(1) What Jerusalem was, the Christian Church is.

(2) I will cause to be remembered Rahab, which means Egypt, and Babylon, those ancient enemies of Israel ; Philistia and Tyre, with Arabia,—these are become mine, and are made heirs of the spiritual

blessings which belong to God's own city.

(3) Our spiritual birth is the only one upon which we should value ourselves, because it leads to the inheritance of the saints in light.

(4) In thee, O Sion, is the fountain of salvation.

of our humble desires whensoever we call upon thee. Let the souls of thy servants, in the midst of their troubles, be refreshed with the comforts of thy grace, and be defended from the assaults of their spiritual adversaries. Turn thee unto us in mercy ; give thy strength unto us, teach us thy laws, incline us to the fear of thy Name, and knit our hearts unto thee with the indissoluble bands of charity and holy obedience : that our souls being saved from destruction, we may worship thee, O Lord, and glorify thy Name, who art full of compassion and mercy, long-suffering, plentiful in goodness and truth, which thou hast manifested to us in our deliverance and redemption through Jesus Christ ; to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.*

* THE 87TH PSALM, AS TRANSLATED
BY BISHOP HORSLEY.

Chorus of Priests.

His building is on the holy hills :
Jehovah loveth the gates of Sion
Above all the dwellings of Jacob.
The glories of the wilderness are in thee,
O city of God.

Messiah.

I will remember Egypt and Babylon :
They shall be among them that shall
acknowledge me :
Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia.

Chorus.

This man shall be born there.

A Priest.

And every one shall say of Sion, he was
born there,
And He, the Highest, shall establish her :
Jehovah shall record in the Scriptures of
the peoples,

Chorus.

(That) This man was born there.

Chorus.

And all that were afflicted in thee
Shall sing like those that keep a festival.

MARCH.	}	PSALM LXXXVIII.
JULY.		
NOVEMBER.		

The nature and degree of the sufferings related in this Psalm, and the strength of the expressions used to describe them, concur in directing an application of the whole to our blessed Lord. His unexampled sorrows, both in body and soul—the desertion of his disciples in the day of his trouble—his bitter passion and approaching death, with his frequent and fervent prayers for the salvation of the Church through him, and for the manifestation of God's glory,—these are the particulars treated of in this instructive and affecting composition, the recital of which should lead us to an humble and pious acknowledgment of the exceeding great love of our Lord, and only Saviour, towards us.

1. O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee : O let my prayer enter into thy presence ; incline thine ear unto my calling.¹

2 & 3. For my soul is full of trouble, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave : I am counted as

⁽¹⁾ The Psalmist speaks in the person of the Messiah.

one of them that go down to the pit, and I have been even as a man that hath no strength.

4. Free [or counted] among the dead, like unto them that are wounded, and lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more; and they are cut off from thy hand.²

5 & 6. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit; in a place of darkness, and in the deep: thine indignation lieth hard upon me, and thou hast vexed me with all thy storms.

7 & 8. Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me, and made me to be abhorred of them: I am so fast in prison that I cannot get forth.

9. My sight faileth for very trouble: Lord, I have called daily upon thee: I have stretched forth my hands unto thee.³

10. Dost thou shew wonders among the dead, or shall the dead rise up again, and praise thee?⁴

11. Shall thy loving-kindness be shewed in the grave, or thy faithfulness in destruction?

12. Shall thy wondrous works be known in the dark; and thy righteousness in the land where all things are forgotten?

13. Unto thee have I cried, O Lord, and early shall my prayer come before thee.

14. Lord, why abhorrest thou my soul, and hidest thou thy face from me?

⁽²⁾ Whom thou rememberest no more as living objects upon earth. why abhorrest thou my soul?" These verses contain the most powerful plea which Christ himself, in his prayers to the Father, could urge for the resurrection of the dead, namely, that man would otherwise be deprived of his salvation, and God of the glory resulting from it.

⁽³⁾ See Hebrews, v. 7.

⁽⁴⁾ In the 10th, 11th, and 12th verses, the Psalmist designs to convey his firm belief in a future state: he expostulates in an humble pious manner with his Maker, saying, "Since thou canst raise the dead,

and God of the glory resulting from it.

15. I am in misery, and like unto him that is at the point to die : even from my youth up thy terrors have I suffered with a troubled mind.

16. Thy wrathful displeasure goeth over me, and the fear of thee hath undone me.

17. They came round about me daily like water, and compassed me together on every side.

18. My lovers and friends hast thou put away from me, and hid mine acquaintance out of my sight.

O Lord God of our salvation, incline thine ear unto us, who now prostrate ourselves before thy divine Majesty, in humble acknowledgment of the many and great sins, which, from time to time, have disgraced our Christian profession. The remembrance of them is grievous unto our souls, and but for thy mercies towards us in Christ Jesus,—but for the atonement of our ever adorable Saviour, thine indignation would have laid hard upon us for ever and ever. Accept, O gracious God, of our humble and sincere repentance, and grant unto us that spiritual strength and consolation, which may revive our souls, and enable us to walk henceforth, as becometh the disciples of the crucified Jesus, in all meekness and charity—in faith and newness of life. Mortify in us, who are evil in thy sight, and defiled by sin, all pride and covetousness ; and plant in our hearts awful apprehen-

sions of thy glorious Majesty, through whose power this corruptible shall put on incorruption. Let the terrors of thy wrath, and the glories of thy mercy, as ready to be revealed at the last day, be ever present to our minds, restraining us from evil, and exciting in us all those holy dispositions in which thou lovest and delightest. Grant this, O merciful Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our Lord. Amen.

MARCH.

JULY.

NOVEMBER.

} PSALM LXXXIX.

The greatness and goodness of Jehovah, and his covenanted mercies to David, are largely set forth, and in language which very clearly points to the Messiah ; for although, in a literal and primary sense, the covenant may have respect to Solomon as for a time, yet, spiritually, it must be considered to have related to Christ for ever. It is to be observed, that the covenants made with Abraham and David had their origin and foundation in the covenant made with Messiah, who was the true Father of the Faithful—the Beloved and Chosen of God—the great Prophet, Priest, and King—the only

person qualified to be a mediator, and to engage in a covenant with the Father for mankind. His sufferings were the price of our redemption ; and because he suffered in the flesh as the son of David, therefore is he established for ever, and his throne shall be built up to all generations.

1. My song shall be alway of the loving-kindness of the Lord : with my mouth will I ever be shewing thy truth, from one generation to another.¹

2. For I have said, Mercy shall be set up for ever ; thy truth shalt thou establish in the heavens.²

3 & 4. I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and set up thy throne from one generation to another.³

5. O Lord, the very heavens shall praise thy wondrous works, and thy truth in the congregation of the saints.

6 & 7. For who is he among the clouds, that shall be compared unto the Lord ? and what is he among the gods,⁴ that shall be like unto the Lord ?

8. God is very greatly to be feared in the council of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are round about him.

9. O Lord God of hosts, who is like unto thee ? thy truth, most mighty Lord, is on every side.

10 and 11. Thou rulest the raging of the sea ;

(1) See 2 Tim. i. 8—10.

or type of the everlasting covenant with

(2) That is, make as lasting as the Christ. See Luke, i. 32, 33.

heavens.

(4) "Among the gods" means, among the sons of the mighty.

thou stillest the waves thereof when they arise :
thou hast subdued Egypt, and destroyed it ; thou
hast scattered thine enemies abroad with thy mighty
arm.

12. The heavens are thine ; the earth also is
thine : thou hast laid the foundation of the round
world, and all that therein is.

13 and 14. Thou hast made the north and the
south ; Tabor and Hermon⁵ shall rejoice in thy
Name. Thou hast a mighty arm ; strong is thy
hand, and high is thy right hand.

15. Righteousness and equity are the habitation
of thy seat ; mercy and truth shall go before thy
face.

16 & 17. Blessed is the people, O Lord, that
can rejoice in thee ; they shall walk in the light of
thy countenance ; their delight shall be daily in thy
Name, and in thy righteousness shall they make
their boast.⁶

18 & 19. For thou art the glory of their strength,
and in thy loving-kindness thou shalt lift up our
horns : for the Lord is our defence ; the Holy One
of Israel is our King.

20 & 21. Thou spakest sometime in visions unto
thy saints, and saidst, I have laid help upon one
that is mighty ; I have exalted one chosen out of the
people ; I have found David, my servant ; with my
holy oil have I anointed him.⁷

22 & 23. My hand shall hold him fast, and my
arm shall strengthen him : the enemy shall not be

⁽⁵⁾ Mounts Tabor and Hermon figuratively denote the east and the west. Our God and our Saviour. In his righteousness only do we trust, and in his

⁽⁶⁾ Having heard the sound of the Gospel, and experienced its illuminating influences, we will rejoice in the Name of power only is our strength.

⁽⁷⁾ See Ezekiel, xxxiv. 23. to the end, and xxxvii. 24. to the end.

able to do him violence ; the son of wickedness shall not hurt him.

24 & 25. I will smite down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. My truth also, and my mercy, shall be with him ; and in my Name shall his horn be exalted.

26, 27, & 28. I will set his dominions also in the sea, and his right hand in the floods. He shall call me, Thou art my Father, my God, and my strong salvation ; and I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.⁸

29 & 30. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him : his seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.

31 & 32. But if children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments ; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments ; I will visit their offences with the rod, and their sin with scourges.

33 & 34. Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my truth to fail ; my covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.

35. Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David.

36. His seed shall endure for ever, and his seat is like as the sun before me : he shall stand fast for evermore, as the moon, and as the faithful witness in heaven.⁹

37 & 38. ¹⁰But thou hast abhorred and forsaken

(8) The empire of Christ is universal, over Jews and Gentiles, throughout the earth.

(9) The rainbow is a faithful witness of the immutability of God's word.

(10) The manifold calamities of Sion are enumerated in these verses ; and we are taught to expect, that the prevalence of iniquity, and the oppressions of the

thine Anointed, and art displeased at him ; thou hast broken the covenant of thy servant, and cast his crown to the ground.

39 & 40. Thou hast overthrown all his hedges, and broken down his strongholds. All they that go by, spoil him ; and he is become a reproach to his neighbours.

41 & 42. Thou hast set up the right hand of his enemies, and made all his adversaries to rejoice ; thou hast taken away the edge of his sword, and givest him not victory in the battle.

43 & 44. Thou hast put out his glory, and cast his throne down to the ground : the days of his youth hast thou shortened, and covered him with dishonour.

45 & 46. ¹¹Lord, how long wilt thou hide thyself? for ever? and shall thy wrath burn like fire? O remember how short my time is! wherefore hast thou made all men for nought?

47. What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?

48. Lord, where are thy old loving-kindnesses, which thou swarest unto David in thy truth?

49 & 50. Remember, Lord, the rebuke that thy servants have, and how I do bear in my bosom the rebukes of many people, wherewith thine enemies have blasphemed thee, and slandered the footsteps of thine Anointed.¹²

51. Praised be the Lord for evermore. Amen, and Amen.

Church, in the last days, will be such as to put the faith and hope of Christ's servants to a sore trial.

⁽¹¹⁾ This is the humble and dutiful expostulation of the Church.

⁽¹²⁾ See 2 Peter, iii. 1 and 4

O God, Father of mercies, who hast begotten us to a lively hope of salvation through Jesus Christ, cherish in our hearts, we beseech thee, such a saving faith, and such fervent hopes, that we may go on our way rejoicing, and, having before our eyes the fear and the love of thy holy Name, may be enabled to bring into subjection every proud thought, and every carnal feeling, which exalteth itself above that which is good for us. Give unto us grace to spend our time, in this transitory world, in virtuous and holy exercises, that, when the day of our death arrives, we may feel the sweet refreshing of thy Spirit, comforting our souls, and sustaining our infirmities. And grant that, being clothed with the wedding-garment of the Gospel, we may be accounted children of the Lamb, and received as such at his second coming to judge the world. To him, with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, be ascribed all praise, might, majesty, and glory, now and for evermore. Amen.

MARCH.

JULY.

NOVEMBER.

}

PSALM XC.

We are here presented with a most affecting description of man's mortal and transitory state on earth since the Fall. The Psalmist (who, it is supposed, was Moses) complains, that few persons meditate upon death in such a manner as to prepare themselves for it, and he offers up a prayer for grace to do so, and for the mercies of redemption. God is become, in Christ Jesus, the refuge to which we may resort under all the adverse circumstances of life. O let us walk with him for the few short years we remain on earth, that we may find an entrance into his everlasting rest, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 & 2. Lord, thou hast been our refuge, from one generation to another : before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made, thou art God from everlasting, and world without end.

3. Thou turnest man to destruction ; again thou sayest, Come again, ye children of men.

4. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday, seeing that is past as a watch in the night.

5. As soon as thou scatterest them, they are even as a sleep, and fade away suddenly like the grass.

6. In the morning it is green, and groweth up ; but in the evening it is cut down, dried up, and withered.

7. For we consume away in thy displeasure, and are afraid at thy wrathful indignation.

8. Thou hast set our misdeeds before thee, and our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.

9. For when thou art angry, all our days are gone ; we bring our years to an end, as it were a tale that is told.

10. The days of our age are threescore years and ten ; and though men be so strong that they come to fourscore years, yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow : so soon passeth it away, and we are gone.¹

11. But who regardeth the power of thy wrath ? For even thereafter, as a man feareth, so is thy displeasure.²

12. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

13. Turn thee again, O Lord, at the last, and be gracious unto thy servants.

14. O satisfy us with thy mercy, and that soon ; so shall we rejoice and be glad, all the days of our life.

15. Comfort us again, now, after the time that

⁽¹⁾ Much, indeed, may the serious heart gain from considering the various images under which the shortness of life is described : " A watch in the night "—" a sleep "—" grass "—" a tale that is told "—" a flower "—" smoke "—" a vapour."

⁽²⁾ Notwithstanding all the manifestations of God's indignation against sin, who is there that duly considereth the power of that indignation, and that his resentment must be in proportion to the fear and homage which is due to him.

thou hast plagued us, and for the years wherein we have suffered adversity.

16. Shew thy servants thy work, and their children thy glory.³

17. And the glorious Majesty of the Lord our God be upon us ; prosper thou the work of our hands upon us ; O prosper thou our handywork.

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility, that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty, to judge both the quick and dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen.

⁽³⁾ The redemption of man is that work of God, whereby his glory is manifested to all generations. The Christian beseeches God to bless, prosper, and perfect him in working out his salvation, until, through him, he shall be enabled to subdue sin, and to triumph over death.

MARCH.

JULY.

NOVEMBER.

}

PSALM XCI.

Bishop Horsley remarks, that in this Psalm there are three speakers,—the chief Levite, the Messiah in his human nature, and Jehovah. The security afforded by a superintending Providence to those who trust therein, is beautifully compared to the protection which a parent bird affords to her young ; whilst, on the other hand, the fury and venom of our spiritual enemies are often portrayed in Scripture by the natural qualities of lions and serpents. There may be occasions when God sees it good for the righteous man to remove him from evil to come ; therefore, when it is said that such as trust in God need not be afraid of pestilence, sickness, or sudden assaults, these promises, in so far as they concern us, must be understood in a conditional sense. The righteous have often been delivered, in a remarkable manner, from worldly calamities ; and if they fall, they fall not in God's displeasure, but in mercy.

1. ¹He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

2. ²I will say unto the Lord, Thou art my hope, and my stronghold, my God ; in him will I trust.

3. ³Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

4. He shall defend thee under his wings, and thou shalt be safe under his feathers ; his faithfulness and truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

5 & 6. Thou shalt not be afraid for any terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day ; for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the sickness that destroyeth in the noon day.

7 & 8. A thousand shall fall beside thee, and ten thousand at thy right hand ; but it shall not come nigh thee : yea, with thine eyes shalt thou behold, and see the reward of the ungodly.

9. ⁴For thou, Lord, art my hope ; thou hast set thine house of defence very high.

10 & 11. ⁵There shall no evil happen unto thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling ; for he will give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

12 & 13. They shall bear thee in their hands, that thou hurt not thy foot against a stone : thou shalt go upon the lion and adder ; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet.

14. ⁶Because he hath set his love upon me, there-

(¹) Spoken by the chief Levite.

(⁴) Messiah.

(²) Messiah.

(⁵) Chief Levite.

(³) Chief Levite addressing Messiah.

(⁶) Jehorah.

fore will I deliver him ; I will set him up, because he hath known my Name.

15 & 16. He shall call upon me, and I will hear him ; yea, I am with him in trouble ; I will deliver him, and bring him to honour ; with long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

O Lord God, our hope and our stronghold, have mercy upon us, and defend us under the shadow of thy wings, that we, trusting to thy defence, may, by thy faithfulness and truth, be covered as with a shield and buckler. Give thy angels charge concerning us, that we may be preserved and kept in all our ways ; that no evil happen unto us, no plague come nigh our dwelling, no arrows of thy vengeance may disturb our peace and safety. Let thy ministering spirits bear us in their hands, that the assaults of Satan harm us not, and that we may have power to resist the temptations of the world and of the flesh. Do thou, O God, set thy love upon us, and receive us as thy children by adoption, through thy well-beloved Son, that thou mayest shew us thy salvation, and at the end of our days on earth may make us partakers of a blessed eternity, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

MARCH. }
JULY. } PSALM XCII. & XCIII.
NOVEMBER. }

Praise and thanksgiving are among the joys of heaven, and should be the delight of every Christian who looks forward to the glories of an immortal state. The mercy of God in promising salvation, and his faithfulness in accomplishing it, furnish inexhaustible subjects for this morning and evening sacrifice. All the workers of wickedness, though they appear to flourish for a season, shall eventually be destroyed for evermore ; but they to whom (to use Scripture language) an unction has been given from the Holy One, they shall be exalted in the Redeemer, and shall flourish in the courts of the house of our God. Happy the person whose goodness is progressive, whose virtues increase with his years, whose fervour of love to his heavenly Father, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, goeth on burning and shining more and more until that perfect day arrive, when he shall receive the consummation of all his hopes, honour, glory, and immortality, for ever and ever.

PSALM XCII.

1 & 2. It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy Name, O Most Highest ; to tell of thy loving-kindness early in the morning, and of thy truth in the night season ;

3. Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the lute ; upon a loud instrument, and upon the harp.

4. For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy works, and I will rejoice in giving praise for the operations of thy hands.

5 & 6. O Lord, how glorious are thy works ; thy thoughts are very deep : an unwise man doth not well consider this, and a fool doth not understand it.

7. When the ungodly are green as the grass, and when all the workers of wickedness do flourish, then shall they be destroyed for ever ; but thou, Lord, art the Most Highest for evermore.

8. For, lo ! thine enemies, O Lord, lo ! thine enemies shall perish, and all the workers of wickedness shall be destroyed.

9. But mine horn shall be exalted like the horn of an unicorn, for I am anointed with fresh oil.

10. Mine eye also shall see his lust of mine enemies ; and mine ear shall hear his desire of the wicked that rise up against me.¹

11. The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, and shall spread abroad like a cedar in Libanus.

⁽¹⁾ This verse is intended to express an assurance of faith, an humble confidence in the promises of God, that our efforts shall at length be crowned with victory over the enemies of our salvation.

12 & 13. Such as are planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of the house of our God : they shall also bring forth more fruit in their age, and shall be fat and well-liking.

14. That they may shew how true the Lord my strength is, and that there is no unrighteousness in him.

PSALM XCIII.

1 & 2. The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty : the Lord is clothed with strength, where-with he hath girded himself : the world also is established that it cannot be moved.

3. Ever since the world began hath thy seat been prepared ; thou art from everlasting.¹

4 & 5. The floods are risen, O Lord, the floods have lift up their voice ; the floods lift up their waves : the waves of the sea are mighty, and rage horribly ; but yet the Lord, who dwelleth on high, is mightier.

6. Thy testimonies, O Lord, are very sure ; holiness becometh thine house for ever.

O Lord God, thou art the Most Highest for evermore : thy works are glorious, and thy thoughts are very deep ; make our hearts and tongues instruments of thy praise, that we may

⁽¹⁾ A new and spiritual kingdom hath been erected by our Redeemer, the enemies to which are represented as floods, which, though mighty, shall be put down by him that is mightier.

tell of thy mercy early in the morning, and of thy truth in the night season. Let thy merciful kindness descend evermore upon the righteous, that being continually watered with the dew of temporal and spiritual blessings, they may bring forth the fruits of a holy conversation. O let us not have fellowship in this world with the ungodly, lest we be tempted to put our hands unto wickedness, and so be partakers of their portion in the world to come; but grant that our hearts, being rooted and grounded in love to thee, we may be planted in the courts of the house of our God, and may flourish therein to all eternity, through the mercies and merits of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

MARCH.

JULY.

NOVEMBER.

}

PSALM XCIV.

The faithful, under persecution or affliction, may take comfort from this consideration, that God, who made the eye and planted the ear, cannot behold iniquity with indifference. Although, to answer wise and salutary ends, he suffers his servants to be chastened, and

permits oppression and injustice to prosper for a time, yet he will at length arise, and reward the proud after their deserving. Happy are they who, having learned from the Scriptures of truth, the lessons of faith and patience therein inculcated, enjoy tranquillity of soul in time of trouble, under the conviction that God will not utterly forsake them, but that what seems mysterious to us, who now see through a glass darkly, shall be made up by the future dispensations of God.

1. O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth ; thou God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself.

2. Arise, thou Judge of the world, and reward the proud after their deserving.

3 & 4. Lord, how long shall the ungodly, how long shall the ungodly triumph ? how long shall all wicked doers speak so disdainfully, and make such proud boasting ?

5, 6, & 7. They smite down thy people, O Lord, and trouble thine heritage ; they murder the widow and the stranger, and put the fatherless to death ; and yet they say. Tush, the Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.

8. Take heed, ye unwise among the people ; O ye fools, when will ye understand ?

9 & 10. He that planted the ear, shall he not hear ? or he that made the eye, shall he not see ? Or he that nutureth the heathen, it is he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he punish ?

11. The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are but vain.

12 & 13. Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him in thy law ; that thou mayest give him patience in time of adversity, until the pit be digged up for the ungodly.

14 & 15. For the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance ; but judgment shall return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart shall follow it.

16. Who will rise up with me against the wicked ? or who will take my part against the evil-doers ?¹

17. If the Lord had not helped me, it had not failed but my soul had been put to silence.

18. But when I said, My foot hath slipt, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.

19. In the multitude of the sorrows that I had in my heart, thy comforts have refreshed my soul.

20. Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law ?

21. They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood.

22 & 23. But the Lord is my refuge, and my God is the strength of my confidence. He shall recompense them their wickedness, and destroy them in their own malice : yea, the Lord our God shall destroy them.

⁽¹⁾ The Psalmist speaks in the person of Messiah.

O Lord God, Judge of the world, to whom belongeth vengeance, and the execution of righteous judgment, have mercy upon us; chasten us with thy fatherly correction when we sin against thee; but be thou our refuge in time of adversity, giving us much patience, that our feet slip not, nor our souls be put to silence. Grant, O Lord, that we may view all thy dispensations with a perfect trust and confidence in thy divine mercy; that in all our troubles we may still look up to thee as the author of all good, the fountain of all comfort; that so, passing through this vale of tears, we faint not at present calamities; but that, upheld by faith, we may go on our way rejoicing, until we come to those heavenly mansions where there shall be no more pain, nor sickness, nor sorrow — where former things shall have passed away, and an eternity of bliss be prepared for all thy faithful people, through the merits of Christ Jesus our Lord; to whom, with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for evermore. Amen.

MARCH.
JULY.
NOVEMBER. } PSALMS XCV. & XCVI.*

Our blessed Saviour hath told us, that where two or three are gathered together in his Name, there is he in the midst of them ; let us then heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation, and shew ourselves glad in him, whensoever an opportunity is afforded us of giving praise for the operations of his hands. In the latter

* The following Introduction to the 95th, 96th, 97th, 98th, 99th, and 100th Psalms, is by Bishop Horsley ; but, before perusing it, the Editor begs the reader to bear constantly in mind the prophetic character of the Psalms generally, as also the typical nature of the laws, and ordinances, and covenant made with Israel ; for, without such knowledge, it would be impossible to make a profitable application of these divine hymns to the Christian Church, or to a Christian people.

“ These six Psalms form, if I mistake not, one entire prophetic poem, cited by St Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews, under the title of the introduction of the First Born into the world. Each Psalm has its proper subject, which is some particular branch of the general argument — the establishment of the Messiah’s kingdom. The 95th Psalm asserts Jehovah’s Godhead, and his power over all nature, and exhorts his people to serve him. In Psalm 96, all nations are exhorted to join

in his service, because he cometh to judge all mankind, Jew and Gentile. In the 97th Psalm, Jehovah reigns over all the world ; the idols are deserted, the Just One is glorified. In the 98th Psalm, Jehovah hath done wonders, and wrought deliverance for himself : he hath remembered his mercy towards the house of Israel ; he comes to judge the whole world. This, I think, clearly alludes to a restoration of the Jewish nation. In the 99th, Jehovah, seated between the cherubims in Sion, (the visible Church,) reigns over all the world, to be praised for the justice of his government. This Psalm alludes, I think, to a reign of Jehovah in Sion, subsequent to the restoration of the Jewish nation, when Moses, Aaron, and Samuel are to bear a part in the general worship. In the 100th Psalm, all the world is called upon to praise Jehovah, the Creator, whose mercy and truth are everlasting.”

part of the ninety-fifth Psalm God may be considered as addressing us in the Gospel of his Son, for so we are taught, in the epistle to the Hebrews, to apply what is written therein. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief; for the Apostle assures us that, unless mixed with faith, the word cannot profit us. Sin is deceitful, and hardens the heart; now is the day of our probation. Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation, and so fall short of the promised rest which remaineth for the children of God.

In the ninety-sixth Psalm "the whole earth" is excited "to sing a new song," "to stand in awe of the Lord," and emphatically "to worship him in the beauty of holiness." We are likewise exhorted to bring "presents," or sacrifice, when we come into his courts; and we should remember that the oblation of the heart, and the sacrifice of our lusts, are the only presents which can be acceptable to him, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

PSALM XCV.

1. O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.
2. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and shew ourselves glad in him with psalms.

3. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

4. In his hand are all the corners of the earth, and the strength of the hills is his also.

5. The sea is his, and he made it ; and his hands prepared the dry land.

6. O come, let us worship and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker.

7. For he is the Lord our God ; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

8. To-day,¹ if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness ;

9. When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works.²

10. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their hearts, for they have not known my ways :

11. Unto whom I sware in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest.³

PSALM XCVI.

1. ¹O sing unto the Lord a new song ; sing unto the Lord, all the whole earth.

2. Sing unto the Lord, and praise his Name ; be telling of his salvation from day to day.

⁽¹⁾ O that you would hear his voice to-day, saying unto you.

⁽²⁾ What a contrast do these verses present between the presumption of man on the one hand, and the long-suffering of God on the other.

⁽³⁾ An exclusion from Canaan was the punishment of Jewish contumacy ; so will

exclusion from heaven be the punishment of Christian disobedience.

⁽⁴⁾ The Psalmist, beholding in spirit the accomplishment of the promises—the advent of Christ, and the glory of his kingdom—breaks forth into a strain of exulting joy.

3 & 4. Declare his honour unto the heathen, and his wonders unto all people ; for the Lord is great, and cannot worthily be praised : he is more to be feared than all gods.

5. As for all the gods of the heathen, they are but idols ; but it is the Lord that made the heavens.

6. Glory and worship are before him : power and honour are in his sanctuary.

7. Ascribe unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, ascribe unto the Lord worship and power.

8. Ascribe unto the Lord the honour due unto his Name ; bring presents, and come into his courts.

9. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness ; let the whole earth stand in awe of him.

10. ²Tell it out among the heathen, that the Lord is King, and that it is he who hath made the round world so fast that it cannot be moved ; and how that he shall judge the people righteously.

11. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad ; let the sea make a noise, and all that therein is.

12. Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it ; then shall all the trees of the wood³ rejoice before the Lord.

13. For he cometh,⁴ for he cometh to judge the earth, and with righteousness to judge the world, and the people with his truth.

(²) The Lord, who hath blessed us with a knowledge of his salvation, hath a right to expect that we should be zealous in communicating that blessing to others.

(³) Trees of the wood : " Trees of right-

cousness — the planting of the Lord," Isaiah, lxi. 3.

(⁴) The coming of Christ is twofold,— 1st, He came to redeem and sanctify the creature ; and, 2d, He will come again to glorify it.

O Almighty God, Maker of all things, Judge of all men, who hast commanded us to pray unto thee without ceasing, and hast promised to hear the supplications of all them that call upon thee in faith and humility of soul; we adore and praise thine infinite Majesty for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us, and to all men, for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life, but more especially for the redemption of the world by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hopes of glory. Thou knowest us, O God, to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature, we cannot always stand upright, but be thou, O God, our shepherd. Thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep, — thou that sittest between the chernim, — do thou, O God, by means of thy sanctifying grace, so uphold our goings in thy way, that we fail not finally to attain thy heavenly rest, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

MARCH. }
JULY. } PSALMS XCVII. & XCVIII.
NOVEMBER. }

The Lord Jesus, triumphant over death and hell, is gone up on high,—gone, as he graciously assures us in his Gospel, to prepare a place for all his beloved followers. What greater cause can those who really love and obey his Gospel, have to rejoice? whilst, on the other hand, those who reject it, or who do not obey the truth, have great cause to dread the terrors of his wrath: “there shall go a fire before him, and burn up his enemies on every side.” O ye that love him, see that ye hate the thing which is evil: religion must be rooted in the heart; a Christian must not only serve God outwardly, but must inwardly love him,—he must not only abstain from evil, but he must do good.

PSALM XCVII.

1. The Lord is King, the earth may be glad thereof; yea, the multitude of the isles may be glad thereof.

2 Clouds and darkness are round about him;

righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his seat.¹

3. There shall go a fire before him, and burn up his enemies on every side.

4. His lightnings gave shine unto the world ; the earth saw it, and was afraid.

5. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord ; at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.

6. The heavens have declared his righteousness, and all the people have seen his glory.

7. Confounded be all they that worship carved images, and that delight in vain gods ; worship him, all ye gods.

8. Sion heard of it, and rejoiced, and the daughters of Judah were glad, because of thy judgments, O Lord.²

9. For thou, Lord, art higher than all that are in the earth ; thou art exalted far above all gods.

10. O ye that love the Lord, see that ye hate the thing which is evil : the Lord preserveth the souls of his saints : he shall deliver them from the hand of the ungodly.

11. There is sprung up a light for the righteous,³ and joyful gladness for such as are true-hearted.

12. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous, and give thanks for a remembrance of his holiness.

(1) When the mercy and grace of our Heavenly King are to be described, he is likened to the sun gladdening universal nature with his beneficent rays. But when we are to conceive him as going forth to punish his adversaries, he is

pictured as surrounded with clouds and darkness ; or with lightnings and fire.

(2) By " the daughters of Judah," we may understand the Christian churches.

(3) Christ is called, " a Light to lighten the Gentiles." Luke, ii. 32.

PSALM XCVIII.

1 & 2. O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things : with his own right hand, and with his holy arm, hath he gotten himself the victory.¹

3. The Lord declared his salvation ; his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.

4. He hath remembered his mercy and truth toward the house of Israel, and all the ends of the world have seen the salvation of our God.

5 & 6. Show yourselves joyful unto the Lord, all ye lands ; sing, rejoice, and give thanks : praise the Lord upon the harp ; sing to the harp with a psalm of thanksgiving.

7. With trumpets also, and shawms, O shew yourselves joyful before the Lord the King.

8. Let the sea make a noise, and all that therein is ; the round world, and they that dwell therein.

9. Let the floods clap their hands, and let the hills be joyful together before the Lord ; for he is come to judge the earth.

10. With righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.

O blessed Jesus, who hast triumphed over the powers of darkness, and over hell and the grave — who, by thy glorious resurrection, hast

⁽¹⁾ See Note at commencement of the 96th Psalm.

made known the power of thy divinity, and proved thyself to be the true Messias ; keep us, we beseech thee, steadfast in thy faith and fear, and grant that all the actions of our life may testify the reality of our belief. Make us to rise from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, that as we are buried with thee by baptism, we may mortify all our corrupt lusts and desires, and place our affections on heaven and heavenly things, that so in the day of retribution and great terrors to the wicked, when a fire shall go forth from thy presence to burn up thine enemies on every side, we may be safe under the shadow of thy wings—may be made partakers of everlasting joy, through thy merits, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, now and for evermore. Amen.

MARCH.

JULY.

NOVEMBER.

} PSALMS XCIX. & C.

The rebellion of man can never defeat or hinder the counsels of the Most High : whatever the Lord hath declared, that he will assuredly perform. His enemies have reason

to tremble, for he will not spare the guilty ; and his servants have reason to rejoice, for he is mighty to save. And if the Israelites were blessed through the intercession of Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, with how much more confidence may we expect blessings, through the merciful intercession of Christ ? Do we not perceive what great things God hath already done for us ; and have we not his precious promises of future blessings to rest upon, as an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast ? It well becometh, then, the righteous to be joyful, and to enter with joy into the courts of the Lord's house ; nor can there be, here below, any greater resemblance of the court and company of heaven than in the assemblies and congregations of religious and pious persons pouring out their prayers to God, and celebrating the praises of their Creator and Redeemer.

PSALM XCIX.

1. The Lord is King, be the people never so impatient : he sitteth between the cherubims, be the earth never so unquiet.

2. The Lord is great in Sion, and high above all people.

3. They shall give thanks unto thy Name, which is great, wonderful, and holy.

4. The King's power loveth judgment : thou hast

prepared equity ; thou hast executed judgment and righteousness in Jacob.

5. O magnify the Lord our God, and fall down before his footstool, for he is holy.

6. Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among such as call upon his Name ; these called upon the Lord, and he heard them.

7. He spake unto them out of the cloudy pillar ; for they kept his testimonies, and the law that he gave them.

8. Thou ¹heardest them, O Lord our God. Thou forgavest them, O God, and punishedst their own inventions.

9. O magnify the Lord our God, and worship him upon his holy hill, for the Lord our God is holy.

PSALM C.

1. O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands ; serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with a song.

2. Be ye sure that the Lord he is God ; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves ;² we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

3. O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise ; be thankful unto him, and speak good of his Name.

4. For the Lord is gracious ; his mercy is everlasting ; and his truth endureth from generation to generation.

⁽¹⁾ Thou heardest these mediators ; thou forgavest thy people, even when thou hadst begun to punish.

⁽²⁾ We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Eph. ii. 10.

O great God, King of heaven and earth ; thou that sittest unmoved amid the great convulsions and revolutions of the world ; give unto us thy servants awful apprehensions of thy sanctity and perfections, of thy Name and nature, which is great, wonderful, and holy. Thou hast created us out of nothing ; and hast redeemed us from misery and death, though we had rebelled against thee. O grant that, by the teaching of thy Holy Spirit, we may walk as thou hast commanded us ; that we may believe what thou hast taught us, and may inherit the promises thou hast given us through thy well-beloved Son. Thou art our guide and defence ; we are thy people and the sheep of thy pasture. Be thou mercifully pleased to protect us from the snares of Satan ; to deliver us from the corruptions of our sinful nature ; and to receive us into the fold of everlasting rest, where thou, O God, reignest in the unity of the blessed Trinity ; to whom be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

MARCH.

JULY.

NOVEMBER.

}

PSALM CI.

In return for the mercy shewn to David, and for the judgment of God upon his enemies, the Israelitish monarch declares his resolution to set an example of true wisdom and unshaken integrity to his court and people, desiring earnestly, at the same time, the assistance of Divine grace to enable him to do so. As is the sovereign, so will be the court; as is the master or mistress of a family, so will be the household. David not only resolves to walk himself with an upright heart, but declares that he would expel from his presence all depraved persons; that he would not know a wicked person; that his servants should be chosen from among them that lead a godly life, and that he that telleth lies should not tarry in his sight.

1 & 2. My song shall be of mercy and judgment : unto thee, O Lord, will I sing. Oh let me have understanding in the way of godliness.

3. When wilt thou come unto me ? I will walk in my house with a perfect heart.¹

⁽¹⁾ The Christian knoweth that he strengtheneth him with his Spirit in the can do all things through Christ, who inner man.

4. I will take no wicked thing in hand : I hate the sins of unfaithfulness :² there shall no such cleave unto me.

5. A froward³ heart shall depart from me ; I will not know a wicked person.

6 & 7. Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I destroy : whoso hath also a proud look and high stomach, I will not suffer him.

8 & 9. Mine eyes look upon such as are faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me : whoso leadeth a godly life, he shall be my servant.

10. There shall no deceitful person dwell in my house : he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.

11. I shall soon destroy all the ungodly that are in the land, that I may root out all wicked doers from the city of the Lord.

O Lord God of eternal purity, who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, enlighten our understandings that we may have knowledge in the way of godliness. Make our paths straight and our ways perfect. Take from us all insincerity ; and correct and mortify in us all corrupt and peevish dispositions. Let us love the society of the upright, and hate and shun the fellowship of the wicked, that we may not be destroyed with the ungodly, nor banished

⁽²⁾ The sins of unfaithfulness are such deeds as are contrary to God's law.

⁽³⁾ A "froward," means a depraved heart.

from thy presence. Keep the door of our lips, O God, that we sin not against thee by slandering our neighbour ; and grant that, by watchfulness and humility, and by a sacred regard for truth, we may be enabled, through the aid of thy Divine Spirit, so to walk in this life present, that we fail not finally to be made partakers of the joys of heaven, through the merits of Jesus Christ our blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

MARCH.

JULY.

NOVEMBER.

}

PSALM CII.

The holy Psalmist, writing during the captivity in Babylon, feels himself labouring under the Divine wrath, but expresses, nevertheless, a trust in the mercies of God. Our Church, by making this one of the proper Psalms for Ash Wednesday, directs us to apply it to the wounded spirit of such as are touched with a true sense of the infirmities of sin. To such the Lord addresses himself, when he says, "Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." O merciful Redeemer ! these are indeed words of

comfort ; thou hast turned our heaviness into joy : for ever praised be thy holy Name !

1. Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my crying come unto thee.

2. Hide not thy face from me in the time of my trouble ; incline thine ear unto me when I call : O hear me, and that right soon.

3. For my days are consumed away like smoke, and my bones are burnt up as it were a fire-brand.

4 & 5. My heart is smitten down, and withered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread :¹ for the voice of my groaning, my bones will scarce cleave to my flesh.

6 & 7. I am become like a pelican in the wilderness, and like an owl that is in the desert :² I have watched, and am even as a sparrow, that sitteth alone upon the house-top.

8. Mine enemies revile me all the day long, and they that are mad upon me, are sworn together against me.

9 & 10. For I have eaten ashes as it were bread, and mingled my drink with weeping ;³ and that because of thine indignation and wrath, for thou hast taken me up and cast me down.

11 & 12. My days are gone like a shadow, and I am withered like grass : but thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever, and thy remembrance throughout all generations.

⁽¹⁾ Sickness is the chastisement of Heaven, inflicted often upon us to supply the want of that discipline which we should exercise upon ourselves. See 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32. desirous of retiring from the world ; so also doth the true penitent make his humble confession unto God in secret. See Daniel, ix.

⁽²⁾ I have eaten the bread of humiliation, and drank the water of affliction.

⁽³⁾ The sorrowful man is naturally

13, 14, & 15. 'Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion ; for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come : for thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof ; so the heathen shall fear the Name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory.

16, 17, & 18. When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory : he will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer ; this shall be written for the generation to come, and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord.⁵

19 & 20. For he hath looked down from his sanctuary ; out of the heaven did the Lord behold the earth, that he might hear the mournings of such as are in captivity, and deliver the children appointed unto death ;

21 & 22. That they may declare the Name of the Lord in Sion, and his worship at Jerusalem ; when the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms also, to serve the Lord.

23 & 24. 'He brought down my strength in my journey, and shortened my days ; but I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of mine age ; as for thy years, they endure throughout all generations.

25. Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the

⁽⁴⁾ Here the Psalmist, speaking in another person, comforts the suppliant. Christ Jesus, may from age to age praise the Lord.

⁽⁵⁾ The history of this redemption and restoration by Messiah, thus foretold, hath been written in the Gospel for the benefit of after generations, to the end that the people who are created anew in

⁽⁶⁾ Here the Psalmist again speaks in the person of the first suppliant, and may be thought to advert to the sore trial which the Christian Church hath to undergo in the last days.

foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands ;

26 & 27. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; they all shall wax old as cloth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed ; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.⁷

28. The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall stand fast in thy sight.⁸

O eternal God, who endurest for ever, and thy remembrance throughout all generations, have pity upon us according to thine infinite loving-kindnesses : hear the voice of our groaning, when thine indignation and thy wrath lieth hard upon us, and our sins have put an edge on thy sword. O build thou up the ruin of our souls, repair the breaches of our comforts, and of our spiritual hopes, and let thy glory appear, for that shines brightest in the beams of thy mercy. Look down, O Lord, from thy sanctuary ; hear the prayers and mournings of us, and of all distressed people. Send us health, and grant us life so long as it may be a blessing, and do not shorten our days

(7) Amid the changes and chances of this mortal life, we have a consolation in the eternity and immutability of God our Saviour. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

(8) Shall stand fast until the counsel of God shall be finished, and every prediction receive its full accomplishment in the glorification of the redeemed.

in wrath, but give us grace to spend all our time in the works of repentance and holiness, that when our years fail, and the time of our departure is come, we may be translated to the new heavens, which shall never perish or wax old, there to continue and stand fast in thy sight for ever, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

MARCH.

JULY.

NOVEMBER.

} PSALM CIII.

This is a psalm of praise and thanksgiving to God for his mercies to repentant sinners. In this evangelical and most comfortable hymn, David excites the soul to praise, by calling to mind God's benefits, at the head of which must for ever stand remission of sins, or that full and free pardon purchased for us by Jesus Christ, whereby, if we truly repent and believe in him, our transgressions are done away, and we pass from spiritual death unto life—from a state of guilt into one of justification. How beautifully is the extent and the tenderness of God's mercy illustrated in this psalm — “ look how high the heaven is in comparison of the earth ” — “ as a

father pitieth his own children." Hath any one a heart to feel, and shall he not sing praises unto the Lord? St John saw the throne of Messiah prepared; he beheld the universal choir assembled, and heard, when "all the angels round about the throne, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, with every creature in heaven, earth, and sea, lifted up their voices and sang together, Blessing and honour, and glory and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."

1. ¹Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise his holy Name.

2 & 3. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thy sin, and healeth all thine infirmities;

4 & 5. Who saveth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with mercy and loving-kindness; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, making thee young and lusty as an eagle.²

6. The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all them that are oppressed with wrong.

7. He shewed his ways unto Moses, his works unto the children of Israel.³

8 & 9. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy;

⁽¹⁾ The Psalmist, about to utter a song of praise, endeavours to stir up every power and faculty of the soul to glorify its Saviour, that the understanding may know him, the will choose him, the affections delight in him, the heart believe him, and the tongue confess him.

⁽²⁾ In the Bible version, the latter part of this verse is thus translated:—"So that thy youth is renewed like the eagles."

⁽³⁾ See Exodus, xiii. 18, 19; xiv. 6—8.

long-suffering, and of great goodness : he will not always be chiding, neither keepeth he his anger for ever.

10 & 11. He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our wickednesses: for look how high the heaven is in comparison of the earth, so great is his mercy also toward them that fear him.

12 & 13. Look how wide also the east is from the west ; so far hath he set our sins from us : yea, like as a father pitieth his own children, even so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear him.

14. For he knoweth whereof we are made : he remembereth that we are but dust.

15 & 16. The days of man are but as grass, for he flourisheth as a flower of the field : for as soon as the wind goeth over it, it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more.

17 & 18. But the merciful goodness of the Lord endureth for ever and ever upon them that fear him, and his righteousness upon children's children : even upon such as keep his covenant, and think upon his commandments to do them.⁴

19. The Lord hath prepared his seat in heaven, and his kingdom ruleth over all.

20. O praise the Lord, ye angels of his, ye that excel in strength, ye that fulfil his commandment, and hearken unto the voice of his words.

21. O praise the Lord, all ye his hosts : ye servants of his that do his pleasure.

⁽⁴⁾ Let not man presume, who withereth like the green herb : but let not man despair, whose nature the Son of God hath taken upon him. The flower which fadeth in Adam, blooms anew in Christ.

never to fade again. Man must pay, by death, the temporal penalty of his sins, but mercy shall raise him again to receive the eternal reward purchased by his Saviour's righteousness.

22. O speak good of the Lord, all ye works of his, in all places of his dominion : praise thou the Lord, O my soul.

O gracious Lord God, whose mercy is as high as the heavens ; as great and as multiplied as the moments of eternity : thou hast become exceeding merciful and gracious to all who fear thee, who walk in thy ways, who humble themselves before thee, and sue to thee for pardon and forgiveness through the merits of Christ Jesus. As a father pitieth his own children, so art thou of tender mercy, and full of compassion to all repentant sinners. O grant us understanding that we may comprehend, with all saints, what is the length and breadth, and depth and height of thy great goodness to us frail and erring mortals ; and endue our souls with a lively faith, productive of trust and confidence in thee, and of good works done in obedience to thy blessed will ; so that we may pass the time of our sojourning here in humble hope of thy mercy hereafter ; and when at length thou art pleased to call us hence, we may depart in joyful anticipation of a resurrection to eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

MARCH. }
JULY. } PSALM CIV.*
NOVEMBER. }

This hymn celebrates the power of Jehovah, displayed in the creation of the world, the destruction of the earth by the deluge, and the restoration of beauty and order after that visitation : and it also describes the dependence of all nature, animated and vegetable, upon God's providence, for sustenance and preservation. Transported with a survey of the wonders which present themselves in heaven above, and in earth below, the Psalmist breaks forth into an exclamation, on the variety and magnificence, the harmony and proportion of the works of God in this outward, and visible, and perishing world—thus preparing the mind for contemplation on the miracles of grace and glory, and on the transcendent excellency of those eternal and invisible things which God hath prepared, in another and a better world, for them that love him, and keep his command-

* Bishop Horsley remarks, that as there is no allusion in this psalm to the Mosaic ritual, nor any mention of the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, it should seem as if it was of an earlier date than the Exodus. It consists of parts alternately sung by two companies, which are easily distinguished, inasmuch as in one God is spoken of in the third person, and in the other he is addressed in the second.

ments. Praise thou the Lord, O my soul, praise the Lord.

1 & 2. Praise the Lord, O my soul : O Lord my God, thou art become exceeding glorious ; thou art clothed with majesty and honour ; thou deckest thyself with light as it were with a garment, and spreadest out the heavens like a curtain.

3. Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters, and maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind.

4. He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire.¹

5. He laid the foundations of the earth, that it never should move at any time.

6 & 7. Thou coveredst it with the deep like as with a garment : the waters stand in the hills ; at thy rebuke they flee ; at the voice of thy thunder they are afraid.

8 & 9. They go up as high as the hills, and down to the valleys beneath, even unto the place which thou hast appointed for them : thou hast set them their bounds which they shall not pass, neither turn again to cover the earth.

10 & 11. He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills : all beasts of the field drink thereof, and the wild asses quench their thirst.²

12. Beside them shall the fowls of the air have their habitation, and sing among the branches.

(1) Intellectual beings of the highest order in the realms above, are as ready to fulfil the word of Jehovah, as are the elements of the lower world. Both teach a lesson of obedience on the part of man.

(2) In the spiritual system, or new creation, there are wells of salvation, living waters, waters of comfort, of which all nations are invited to come and drink freely.

13. He watereth the hills from above ; the earth is filled with the fruit of thy works.

14 & 15. He bringeth forth grass for the cattle, and green herb for the service of men ; that he may bring food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man ; and oil to make him a cheerful countenance, and bread to strengthen man's heart.³

16 & 17. The trees of the Lord also are full of sap, even the cedars of Libanus which he hath planted ; wherein the birds make their nests ; and the fir trees are a dwelling for the stork.⁴

18. The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats ; and so are the stony rocks for the conies.

19. He appointed the moon for certain seasons ; and the sun knoweth his going down.

20 & 21. ⁵Thou makest darkness that it may be night, wherein all the beasts of the forest do move : the lions roaring after their prey, do seek their meat from God.

22. The sun ariseth, and they get them away together, and lay them down in their dens.⁶

23. Man goeth forth to his work, and to his labour, until the evening.

24. O Lord, how manifold are thy works : in wisdom hast thou made them all : the earth is full of thy riches !

(³) Let us not forget the spiritual benedictions corresponding with these external ones.

(⁴) The whole earth is a garden, planted by the hand, and watered by the care of Jehovah. God hath also another garden, in which there are other trees of his planting, called by Isaiah "trees of righteousness."

(⁵) When a nation hath filled up the measure of its iniquities, the sun of righteousness departeth, and a horrible night succeeds.

(⁶) When the light of truth and righteousness shineth, error and iniquity flee before it.

25. So is the great and wide sea also ; wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

26. There go the ships, and there is that Leviathan, whom thou hast made to take his pastime therein.

27 & 28. These wait all upon thee, that thou mayest give them meat in due season : when thou givest it them, they gather it ; and when thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good.⁷

29. When thou hidest thy face, they are troubled : when thou takest away their breath, they die, and are turned again to their dust.

30. When thou lettest thy breath go forth, they shall be made ; and thou shalt renew the face of the earth.⁸

31 & 32. The glorious Majesty of the Lord shall endure for ever : the Lord shall rejoice in his works : the earth shall tremble at the look of him ; if he do but touch the hills, they shall smoke.

33 & 34. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live ; I will praise my God while I have my being : and so shall my words please him ; my joy shall be in the Lord.

35. As for sinners, they shall be consumed out of the earth, and the ungodly shall come to an end : praise thou the Lord, O my soul, praise the Lord.

(7) How pleasing is it to consider the whole family of air, earth, and sea, as waiting upon the Father and Lord of all things, expecting his bounties, and awaiting his mercies.

(8) The presence of God is the life, his absence is the death, of the soul.

O Lord God, who art exceeding glorious, who art clothed with majesty and honour, thou hast created all things with infinite wisdom, established them with excellent order, and hast provided for them all with bounteous mercy. Be pleased to give us grace that we may remember thou hast created us all for thy glory : that thou hast planted thine image in us, and hast crowned all our years with thy mercies and loving-kindness. Let us never disobey thy will, forget thy mercies, or deface thine image ; but when all thy creatures praise thee in their manner, let not us, whom thou hast made a little lower than the angels, disturb the blessed order of creation by our sins and irregular appetites. Open thy hand, O Lord, and fill us with good things, both spiritual and temporal ; that when thou takest away our breath, and we die, and turn again to our dust, thou mayest not hide thy face from us, but communicate to us the light of thy countenance, and the glories of thy kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

MARCH.

JULY.

NOVEMBER.



PSALM CV.

Upon bringing the ark to Mount Sion, David teacheth Israel to bless and praise God, for having remembered his covenant, made with an oath to their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that he would, in due time, settle his people in the land of Canaan. Now, it is very remarkable, that in the hymn uttered by Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, on the subject of our redemption by Christ, thanks are given to the Lord God of Israel, because he had visited and redeemed his people, remembering his holy covenant, and performing the oath which he swore to our forefather Abraham. And what was that oath? It was, “that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.” Zacharias, under the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit, transfers the language of the old dispensation to the subject of the new one: he celebrates the redemption of the world by Christ from sin and death, in words which literally describe the redemption of Israel from

Egypt, by Moses, to teach us that we should regard one as a prophetic pledge and figure of the other : that there is another bondage, under which the people of God are held — another Moses, who is to deliver them — another land of promise and of rest, wherein they are to be settled. And let all Christian people, who are in effect the children of faithful Abraham, remember, that as Moses directed Israel to observe God's statutes, and to keep his laws, so was the Church redeemed by Christ, that God might purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

1. O give thanks unto the Lord, and call upon his Name ; tell the people what things he hath done.

2. O let your songs be of him, and praise him ; and let your talking be of all his wondrous works.

3. Rejoice in his holy Name ; let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.

4. Seek the Lord, and his strength ; seek his face evermore.

5 & 6. Remember the marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth, O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen.

7. He is the Lord our God ; his judgments are in all the world.

8 & 9. He hath been alway mindful of his covenant and promise, that he made to a thousand generations ; even the covenant that he made with

Abraham, and the oath that he swore unto Isaac ;¹

10 & 11. And appointed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting testament ; saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance ;

12 & 13. When there were yet but a few of them, and they strangers in the land ; what time as they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people ;

14 & 15. He suffered no man to do them wrong ; yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes ; saying, Touch not mine Anointed, and do my prophets no harm.

16. Moreover, he called for a dearth upon the land, and destroyed all the provision of bread.²

17, 18, & 19. But he had sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold to be a bond-servant ; whose feet they hurt in the stocks ; the iron entered into his soul ; until the time came that his cause was known ; the word of the Lord tried him.

20, 21, & 22. The king sent, and delivered him ; the prince of the people let him go free : he made him lord also of his house, and ruler of all his substance, that he might inform his princes after his will, and teach his senators wisdom.

23. Israel also came into Egypt, and Jacob was a stranger in the land of Ham.

⁽¹⁾ If, by the settlement of Israel in Canaan, God's judgments were apparent ; have they not been equally so by the overthrow of idolatrous nations, and the establishment of the Christian Church ?

heaven's judgments is that foretold by Amos, viii. 11,—“ Behold the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land ; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water ; but of hearing the word of the Lord.”

⁽²⁾ The Word of God is the food and support of the soul, and the strength of

24 & 25. And he increased his people exceedingly, and made them stronger than their enemies ; whose heart turned so, that they hated his people, and dealt unruly with his servants.

26 & 27. Then sent he Moses his servant, and Aaron whom he had chosen : and these shewed his tokens among them, and wonders in the land of Ham.

28, 29, & 30. He sent darkness, and it was dark ; and they were not obedient unto his word : he turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish : their land brought forth frogs ; yea, even in their kings' chambers.

31, 32, & 33. He spake the word, and there came all manner of flies and lice, in all their quarters : he gave them hailstones for rain ; and flames of fire in their land : he smote their vines also, and fig trees ; and destroyed the trees that were in their coasts.

34. He spake the word, and the grasshoppers came, and caterpillars innumerable ; and did eat up all the grass in their land ; and devoured the fruit of their ground.

35. He smote all the first-born in their land, even the chief of all their strength.

36 & 37. ³He brought them forth also with silver and gold ; there was not one feeble person among their tribes ; Egypt was glad at their departing, for they were afraid of them.

38, 39, & 40. ⁴He spread out a cloud to be a

(*) The Psalmist, having recounted God's judgments upon the Egyptians, now proceeds to recount his mercies towards the Israelites.

(4) In our passage through this wilderness of life, be thou, blessed Lord, our guide and our guard : protect us by thy providence, support us by thy word, and

covering, and fire to give light in the night season ; at their desire he brought quails, and he filled them with the bread of heaven. He opened the rock of stone, and the waters flowed out, so that rivers ran in the dry places.

41. For why ? he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant.

42 & 43. And he brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness ; and gave them the lands of the heathen ; and they took the labours of the people in possession ;

44. ⁵That they might keep his statutes, and observe his laws.

O Lord God, who art always mindful of thy covenant and promise to a thousand generations, and didst deliver the seed of Abraham, the children of Jacob, thy chosen, from the slavery of Egypt : continue, we beseech thee, thy mercies to all Christian people—deliver us from the bondage of our sins—preserve us in the ark of thy Church, that we perish not—save us from the dominion of Satan, and all our fleshly lusts, that we may keep thy statutes, and observe thy laws. Give us a true sense

refresh us by thy Spirit : lead us even where, and in what manner, thou wilt, but forsake us not, we most humbly beseech thee.

⁽⁵⁾ Let those who are blessed with affluence bear constantly in mind, that

God hath given them riches, and the leisure which riches procure, not for the purpose of indulging and corrupting themselves and others, but that they may glorify him, benefit their neighbours, and save their own souls.

of the inestimable value of our souls, that we may make it the chief care and concern of our lives to work out our salvation with diligence and sincerity, and to secure an interest in thy favour, which is better than life itself, that so we may at last receive the promise of a blessed eternity, which thou hast assured, through thy well-beloved Son, unto all that believe in thee, and are obedient to thy words. Grant this, O heavenly Father, we most humbly beseech thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

MARCH.

JULY.

NOVEMBER.

}

PSALM CVI.

The history of Israel is almost one continued account of mercies on God's part, and rebellion on theirs. Their faith was exactly the same as is represented by the seed sown on stony ground, and widely different from that which springs up in a broken and penitent heart. They were gratified by their unexpected deliverance, and the destruction of their enemies, and, for a short time, evinced a sense of obligation ; but there was no humiliation for sin, no abiding apprehensions of the glorious perfec-

tions of Jehovah, no steady habitual reliance on his power, wisdom, truth, and love, no submission to his will, or preparation for self-denying obedience; and therefore, in time of temptation, they fell away, having no root in themselves. These things, my brethren, are written for our admonition. O let us turn unto the Lord our God with all our heart and soul, and pray that we may serve him with holy fear and love, walking before him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life.

1. O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is gracious, and his mercy endureth for ever.

2. ¹Who can express the noble acts of the Lord, or shew forth all his praise.

3. Blessed are they that alway keep judgment, and do righteousness.²

4 & 5. ³Remember me, O Lord, according to the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation, that I may see the felicity of thy chosen, and rejoice in the gladness of thy people, and give thanks with thine inheritance.

6. We have sinned with our fathers; we have done amiss, and dealt wickedly.

7 & 8. Our fathers regarded not thy wonders in Egypt, neither kept they thy great goodness in remembrance, but were disobedient at the sea, even at the Red Sea: nevertheless, he helped them for

(¹) The interrogation put in this verse is answered in the next.

(²) They are best qualified to praise God in the voice who glorify him in their lives.

(³) The Psalmist here offers a prayer, which, in substance, forms the most spiritual petition that a devout Christian can prefer to the throne of grace.

his Name's sake, that he might make his power to be known.

9 & 10. He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the deep as through a wilderness; and he saved them from the adversary's hand, and delivered them from the hand of the enemy.

11 & 12. As for those that troubled them, the waters overwhelmed them, there was not one of them left; then believed they his words, and sang praise unto him.

13, 14, & 15. But within a while they forgot his works, and would not abide his counsel; but lust came upon them in the wilderness, and they tempted God in the desert; and he gave them their desire, and sent leanness withal into their soul.

16, 17, & 18. They angered Moses also in the tents, and Aaron, the saint of the Lord; so the earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the congregation of Abiram; and the fire was kindled in their company, the flame burnt up the ungodly.

19 & 20. They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image; thus they turned their glory into the similitude of a calf that eateth hay.

21 & 22. And they forgot God their Saviour, who had done so great things in Egypt: wondrous works in the land of Ham, and fearful things by the Red Sea.

23. So he said, he would have destroyed them, had not Moses, his chosen, stood before him in the gap to turn away his wrathful indignation, lest he should destroy them.

24 & 25. Yea, they thought scorn of that

pleasant land, and gave no credence unto his word, but murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord.⁴

26 & 27. Then lift he up his hand against them to overthrow them in the wilderness; to cast out their seed among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.

28 & 29. They joined themselves unto Baal-peor, and ate the offerings of the dead:⁵ thus they provoked him to anger with their own inventions, and the plague was great among them.

30 & 31. ⁶Then stood up Phinehas and executed judgment, and so the plague was stayed; and that was counted unto him for righteousness among all posterities for evermore.

32 & 33. ⁷They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that he punished Moses for their sakes; because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake⁸ unadvisedly with his lips.

34 & 35. Neither destroyed they the heathen, as the Lord commanded them; but were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.

36, 37, & 38. Insomuch that they worshipped their idols, which were a snare unto them; yea, they offered their sons and their daughters unto devils;⁹ and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they offered unto the idols of Canaan; and the land was defiled

⁽⁴⁾ See Numbers, xiii. xiv.

⁽⁵⁾ By "the offerings of the dead," are meant the sacrifices offered unto lifeless idols. Baal-peor was the false god of the Moabites.

⁽⁶⁾ See Numbers, xxv. 7 to 9.

⁽⁷⁾ See Numbers, xx. 2 to 13.

⁽⁸⁾ He spake, refers to Moses.

⁽⁹⁾ The word devils here refers to the idols of Canaan, idolatry being a work of the devil. Children brought up without religion, and in habits of vice, may be said to be sacrificed to the great enemy of souls.

with blood : thus were they stained with their own works, and went a-whoring with their own inventions.

39, 40, & 41. ¹⁰Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance ; and he gave them over into the hand of the heathen, and they that hated them were lords over them ; their enemies oppressed them, and had them in subjection.

42. Many a time did he deliver them, but they rebelled against him with their own inventions, and were brought down in their wickedness.

43 & 44. Nevertheless, when he saw their adversity, he heard their complaint : he thought upon his covenant, and pitied them, according to the multitude of his mercies ; yea, he made all those that led them away captive to pity them.

45. Deliver us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the heathen, that we may give thanks unto thy holy Name, and make our boast of thy praise.

46. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting, and world without end ; and let all the people say, Amen.

¹¹Praise ye the Lord.

O Lord our God, whose mercy is everlasting,
and whose power infinite, remember us, we

⁽¹⁰⁾ For their last and grand rebellion against the Son of God, their Messiah, whom they murdered, the sore burden of Heaven's displeasure hath rested on them for nearly eighteen hundred years ; but their eyes are not yet opened—their hearts have not yet relented.

⁽¹¹⁾ All voices.

most humbly beseech thee, with the favour which thou hast always shewn to thy people, in whom thou hast delighted from the foundation of the world, and on whom it is thy good pleasure to confer a glorious kingdom. O visit us with thy salvation, with which so many patriarchs, prophets, and kings have desired to be visited—the salvation of thy Christ, the justifier of all them that believe, and the rewarder of his saints; that we may see the good of thy chosen, their felicity in beholding thy countenance, and living for ever in thy presence; that we may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, the unspeakable gladness of those who enter into the joy of their Lord; and glory with thine inheritance, singing halleluiahs before thy throne for ever and ever. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for thy dear Son's sake, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

MARCH.

JULY.

NOVEMBER.

}

PSALM CVII.

This psalm consists of five principal parts; eternal mercy is the theme of it. The spiritual blessings of redemption are represented under

beautiful and expressive images, which images are themselves special acts of God's providential care and love shewn towards the bodies of the sons of Adam in the world, corresponding with as many works of grace, wrought on the souls of believers in Christ. In the latter part of the psalm, the prophet sets forth the power, the justice, and the goodness of God,—his power, in being able to change the very nature of things—his justice and his goodness in so doing, either to punish the rebellious, or to reward the obedient. Let not those who have received the largest share of Heaven's favours therefore boast and presume. The continuance of those favours dependeth upon the continuance of their fidelity and obedience. A truly wise person will treasure up in his heart the contents of this most instructive and delightful psalm, in order that he may fully understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.

PART FIRST.

1. O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is gracious, and his mercy endureth for ever.

2. Let them give thanks, whom the Lord hath redeemed, and delivered from the hand of the enemy;¹

3. And gathered them out of the lands; from the

⁽¹⁾ The members of the Christian Church are now, in the most proper sense, the redeemed of the Lord.

east, and from the west ; from the north, and from the south.

4 & 5. They went astray in the wilderness, out of the way, and found no city to dwell in : hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.²

6. So they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.

7. He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

8 & 9. O that men³ would, therefore, praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men ; for he satisfieth the empty soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

PART SECOND.

10, 11, & 12. Such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, being fast bound in misery and iron, because they rebelled against the words of the Lord, and lightly regarded the counsels of the Most Highest : he also brought down their heart through heaviness ; they fell down, and there was none to help them.⁴

13. So when they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, he delivered them out of their distress.

14. For he brought them out of darkness, and out of the shadow of death, and brake their bonds in sunder.

⁽²⁾ How aptly doth this represent the case of the Christian pilgrim, whose only support and guide is Divine grace.

⁽³⁾ O that men, or, in other words, O that the sons of Adam.

⁽⁴⁾ The grand and universal captivity, is that of sin and death — the grand and universal deliverance, is that by Jesus Christ.

15 & 16. O that men would, therefore, praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men ; for he hath broken the gates of brass, and smitten the bars of iron in sunder.

PART THIRD.

17 & 18. Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted : their soul abhorreth all manner of meat, and they draw nigh unto the gates of death.⁵

19. So when they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, he delivered them out of their distress.

20. He sent his word, and healed them, and they were saved from their destruction.

21 & 22. O that men would, therefore, praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men : that they would offer unto him the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and tell out his works with gladness.

PART FOURTH.

23 & 24. They that go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters ; these men see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.⁶

25, 26, & 27. For, at his word, the stormy wind

⁽⁵⁾ The recovery of men from sickness, and the goodness of God displayed in our affords a third image of the blessings of salvation, are portrayed by that signal redemption. instance of divine power and providence,

⁽⁶⁾ The dangers of our present state, the preservation of mariners in a storm.

ariseth, which lifteth up the waves thereof: they are carried up to the heaven, and down again to the deep: their soul melteth away because of the trouble: they reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end.

28. So when they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, he delivereth them out of their distress.

29 & 30. For he maketh the storm to cease, so that the waves thereof are still; then are they glad because they are at rest; and so he bringeth them unto the haven, where they would be.

31 & 32. O that men would, therefore, praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men: that they would exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the seat of the elders.

PART FIFTH.

33, 34, & 35. Who turneth the floods into a wilderness, and drieth up the water-springs: a fruitful land maketh he barren, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein: again, he maketh the wilderness a standing water, and water-springs of a dry ground.⁷

36 & 37. And there he setteth the hungry, that they may build them a city to dwell in; that they may sow their land, and plant vineyards, to yield them fruits of increase.

38. He blesseth them, so that they multiply

⁽⁷⁾ Doth not the plain of Jordan, and the once fruitful Palestine, attest these truths? and doth not the conversion of the Gentile nations, and the establishment of the Christian Church, attest them also?

exceedingly, and suffereth not their cattle to decrease.

39, 40, & 41. And again, when they are minished, and brought low through oppression, through any plague or trouble ; though he suffer them to be evil entreated through tyrants, and let them wander out of the way in the wilderness ; yet helpeth he the poor out of misery, and maketh him households like a flock of sheep.⁸

42. The righteous will consider this and rejoice, and the mouth of all wickedness shall be stopped.

43. Whoso is wise, will ponder these things, and they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.

O Lord God, gracious and good, whose mercy endureth for ever, have mercy upon us, when in our trouble we call upon thee ; for when our hearts are brought low through heaviness, there is none to help us, or to deliver us out of our distress, but only thou, O Lord. We have sinned—we have rebelled against thee, and lightly regarded thy counsels—we have walked and sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death, being fast bound in the captivity and misery of sin. O bring us out of

(⁸) What revolutions have happened, belief, and the Gentile Church standeth and probably are still to happen, in the only by faith, from which, if she depart, Church ! Jerusalem is fallen through un- vengeance will be executed on her likewise.

darkness, and break our bonds in sunder ;
 guide us through the desert of this world ;
 still the tempests when they arise, and smoothe
 the floods of adversity when they are ready to
 overwhelm us ; and, in thy due time, bring us
 to thy eternal rest, through Jesus Christ our
 Lord. Amen.

MARCH.

JULY.

NOVEMBER.

}

PSALM CIX.

The 108th Psalm is omitted, because its contents are found in the
 57th and 60th Psalms.

The Psalmist, in the person of the Messiah, prophesies the sore judgments that should fall upon the rebellious house of Israel, for their rejection and persecution of him. None of the words used in this psalm are to be considered as imprecations—the whole composition is strictly prophetic. It describes, in a very lively manner, the condition of the Jewish posterity ever since their ancestors fell under the signal vengeance inflicted on them at the siege of Jerusalem :—First, their desolations in their own country ; Secondly, their continual wanderings from place to place, scattered over the face of the earth ; and, Thirdly, their

remarkable covetousness, keeping them always poor and beggarly, be they never so rich, and continually labouring and toiling for gain, as the poorest are wont to do.

In the case of Judas, and of the unbelieving Jews, the enemies of Christ, and of those that are Christ's, may read their own doom if they continue impenitent. No language can express the miseries that are coming upon them, where there will be no remedy, no help, no remission, no mediator to stand between them and the great Accuser—where their worm dieth not, and where the fire is never quenched. Let sinners then take warning, and flee for refuge to the great Redeemer. Let blasphemers cease their cursing—let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

1, 2, & 3. Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise ; for the mouth of the wicked, and the mouth of the deceitful, are opened against me ; they have spoken against me with a lying tongue ; they compassed me about also with words of hatred, and fought against me without a cause.¹

4 & 5. For my love, they are my adversaries, but I give myself unto prayer ; and they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.

⁽¹⁾ The Holy Jesus came unto his own, and his own received him not.

6 & 7. Set thou a wicked man over him ; and let Satan stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned ; and let his prayer become sin.²

8. Let his days be few, and let another take his office.³

9 & 10. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow : let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg ; let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.

11 & 12. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath, and let the strangers spoil his labour : let there be none to extend mercy unto him ; neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children.⁴

13 & 14. Let his posterity be cut off ; and in the generation following, let their name be blotted out : let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord ; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.⁵

15 & 16. Let them be before the Lord continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth, because that he remembered not to shew mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart.

17 & 18. As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him ; as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him ; as he clothed himself with cursing,

(2) The Jewish worship may be considered as sin, because it contains a denial of our Lord.

(3) St Peter (Acts, i. 20.) cites this passage in the case of Judas : and it is moreover applicable as a part of the prophecy to the whole nation of the Jews.

(4) Since the destruction of Jerusalem,

how often hath this race been seized, pillaged, stripped, and impoverished ; nay, often cruelly tortured, by princes and people, in all the nations of the known world.

(5) Compare these predictions with those contained in the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy.

like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.

19 & 20. Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him, and for a girdle, wherewith he is girded continually ; let this be the reward of mine adversaries from the Lord, and of them that speak evil against my soul.

21, 22, & 23. But do thou for me, O God the Lord, for thy Name's sake ; because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me ; for I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me : I am gone, like the shadow when it declineth ; I am tossed up and down as the locust.⁶

24 & 25. My knees are weak through fasting, and my flesh faileth of fatness : I became also a reproach unto them ; when they looked upon me they shook their heads.

26 & 27. Help me, O Lord my God : O save me according to thy mercy ; that they may know that this is thy hand ; that thou, Lord, hast done it.⁷

28 & 29. Let them curse, but bless thou ; when they arise, let them be ashamed, but let thy servant rejoice ; let mine adversaries be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a mantle.

30 & 31. I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth ; yea, I will praise him among the multitude ; for he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul.⁸

(6) In this latter part of the psalm, the Messiah prays to his heavenly Father for deliverance.

(7) The resurrection of Christ was to be the great demonstration of Jehovah's power.

(8) Jesus, the great Mediator, ever standeth among the multitudes of the heavenly host, to intercede for those who are meek and lowly in heart.

O Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men, grant unto thy people, that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise ; that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed ; give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give, that both our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments ; and also that, by thee, we, being defended from the fear of enemies, may pass our time in rest and quietness, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

MARCH.

JULY.

NOVEMBER.

}

PSALM CX.

This psalm refers solely to Christ, of whom it is a prophecy ; and, as such, the words of it

are quoted in the New Testament by Christ himself, by St Peter, and by St Paul. In the first verse, the Psalmist represents the Lord Jehovah as addressing his well-beloved Son, declaring that he should sit at his right hand till every enemy (sin and death included, as St Paul informs us) should be destroyed. David then addresses Messiah. By the rod of his power, is meant his Gospel, as sent forth from Mount Sion,—that Gospel which, made powerful through the Spirit, shall turn the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the Just, in multitudes resembling the drops of morning dew upon the grass. The eternal priesthood of Christ is then declared, conveying to us the comfortable assurance that we have a Mediator with the Father,—a Mediator who drank of the waters of affliction on the way to his kingdom ; and a King, through whose power all the enemies of Christ shall be subdued. But it behoves us most seriously to ask ourselves, whether his kingdom has been set up in our heart — whether the Gospel has been to us the power of God unto salvation — have we been rendered willing to renounce every sin — and do we desire, and long, and constantly pray, to be adorned with the beauties of holiness ? If we cannot answer these questions satisfactorily to our own consciences, have we not reason to consider ourselves as worse than the heathen, and to dread that wrath

which shall “fill the places with dead bodies?” God grant that we may be found among those who look forward with joy to the appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, from whose minds all terror is banished, and for whom there is laid up a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give us at the last day.

1. The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

2. The Lord shall send the rod of thy power out of Sion : Be thou ruler, even in the midst, among thine enemies.

3. In the day of thy power shall the people offer thee free-will offerings, with an holy worship : The dew of thy birth is of the womb of the morning.

4. The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedeck.

5 & 6. The Lord upon thy right hand shall wound even kings in the day of his wrath : he shall

PARAPHRASE.

1. Seeing now, O my Son, that thou hast glorified me on the earth, and finished the work which I gave thee to do — the great work of man's redemption — take now the throne prepared for thee from the foundation of the world.

2. Behold, all power is given unto thee, and thou shalt reign till every opposer shall have been subdued.

3. Thy people, converted by the power of thy grace, shall have their hearts and affections turned to thee : they shall be

adorned with the graces of thy Spirit — with faith, hope, and love ; they shall exceed in number, as well as in brightness, the spangles of early dew.

4. Jehovah hath sworn, and will not change, that the heirs of promise may know the immutability of his counsels.

5 & 6. The Psalmist now addresses Jehovah, declaring, that Messiah shall punish all those heathen emperors who have opposed his word. His Church and people, though persecuted and afflicted for a season, shall, in the end, be mightily delivered.

judge among the heathen ; he shall fill the places with the dead bodies, and smite in sunder the heads over divers countries.

7. He shall drink of the brook in the way : therefore shall he lift up his head.

Almighty Father, who hast given thine only Son to die for our sins, and to rise again for our justification, grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness, that we may always serve thee in pureness of living and truth, through the merits of the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified, receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before thee, for all estates of men in thy holy Church, that every member of the same, in his vocation and ministry, may truly and godly serve thee, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

7. " He humbled himself, and became cross : wherefore God also hath highly obedient unto death, even the death of the exalted him."—Phil. ii. 8.

MARCH. }
JULY. } PSALM CXI.
NOVEMBER. }

In the Bible, we find this and the two following Psalms preceded by the words "Praise ye the Lord," which is a translation of the word "Hallelujah." And what a glorious incitement have we to turn our hearts to this expression, when we read in the Revelation that it is the one used in heaven! "I heard," says St John, "a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Hallelujah, salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God." The Psalmist, on a review of God's past mercies to his chosen people, and with prophetic knowledge of the future mercies designed for mankind through Jesus Christ, breaks forth into this glorious strain, celebrating the mercies of redemption, and of the covenant commanded for ever. Holy and reverend, then, should be God's holy Name to us, whether we praise him secretly in our closets, or when assembled for family devotion, or when we resort to the great congregation on the Sabbath day. The works of the Lord are great; they are those of mercy and salvation:

but, observe, they are sought out of, and are exercised towards, all those only who have pleasure therein. Every word of the last verse of this Psalm should be engraven on our memories ; if it produce its fruit unto holiness, the end will be everlasting life. Praise ye the Lord.

1. I will give thanks unto the Lord with my whole heart ; secretly, among the faithful, and in the congregation.

2. The works of the Lord are great ; sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

3. His work is worthy to be praised, and had in honour ; and his righteousness endureth for ever.

4. The merciful and gracious Lord hath so done his marvellous works, that they ought to be had in remembrance.

5. He hath given meat unto them that fear him ; he shall ever be mindful of his covenant.

6. He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen.¹

7 & 8. The works of his hands are verity and judgment ; all his commandments are true ; they stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and equity.

9. He sent redemption unto his people ; he hath commanded his covenant for ever : holy and reverend is his name.

⁽¹⁾ This power is evidenced to us, by the overthrow of idolatry, and the establishment of the Christian Church.

10. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom : a good understanding have all they that do thereafter ; the praise of it endureth for ever.

O blessed Jesus, whose righteousness endureth for ever, thy work is worthy to be praised and had in honour, for that thou hast been merciful unto us, and hast given unto us ample spiritual sustenance in thy Holy Word and Sacraments. Plant in our hearts, O God, that fear and love of thy holy Name which results from a true and lively faith. Give us wisdom and good understanding, and make us to have pleasure in thee and all thy works, that we, obeying the precepts of thy holy Gospel, and performing the conditions of thy covenant, which thou hast established for ever in truth and equity, in verity and judgment, may worthily praise and adore thy holy Name among the faithful in this life, and among those in the next who are made just through the blood of the Lamb. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

MARCH.

JULY.

NOVEMBER.



PSALM CXII.

That mental enjoyment, that peace of mind which attends a quiet conscience—that spiritual strength vouchsafed to true believers, which enables them to sustain the trials of life with fortitude and patience—that charitable disposition towards our fellow-creatures which results from a sense of God’s love to us through Christ,—these blessings, and more than these, are set forth in this divinely-inspired composition of the Psalmist. The enjoyments of the true Christian are far above all pleasures which the world can afford. Our blessed Saviour says — “ My yoke is easy, and my burden light.” St Paul says — “ Godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come ; ” “ this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation.” A good name (as respects this world even) is more to be desired than great riches ; and when former things shall have passed away, then blessed shall they be whose names are written in the Book of Life. Praise ye the Lord.

1. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord ; he hath great delight in his commandments.

2. His seed shall be mighty upon earth ; the generation of the faithful shall be blessed.

3. Riches and plenteousness shall be in his house, and his righteousness endureth for ever.¹

4. Unto the godly there ariseth up light in the darkness : he is merciful, loving, and righteous.

5. A good man is merciful, and lendeth, and will guide his words with discretion.

6. For he shall never be moved, and the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance.

7. He will not be afraid of any evil tidings, for his heart standeth fast, and believeth in the Lord.

8. His heart is established, and will not shrink, until he see his desire upon his enemies.²

9. He hath dispersed abroad, and given to the poor ; and his righteousness remaineth for ever : his horn shall be exalted with honour.

10. The ungodly shall see it, and it shall grieve him ; he shall gnash with his teeth, and consume away ; the desire of the ungodly shall perish.³

Almighty and most gracious God, who knowest our necessities before we ask, and our

⁽¹⁾ The true wealth of Christians is such as neither moth nor rust doth corrupt.

⁽²⁾ The heart of the humble follower of Jesus shall not shrink in that awful day when death shall no more have dominion over him.

⁽³⁾ The sight of Christ in glory with his saints will be an inexpressible source of torment to those who will be commanded to depart from him, as never having been known by him.

ignorance in asking, we beseech thee to have compassion upon our infirmities. Let not the pursuit of temporal things rob us of that time which ought to be employed in the concerns of our souls, nor divert us from the serious thoughts of the world to come. Make us charitable to those who are in want—willing to distribute, and ready to communicate: and grant that, our minds being freed from all covetous desires, our great care may be to lay up treasure in heaven, that when our bodies are laid in the dust, our souls may be received into those mansions of everlasting glory, which are prepared, through the merits of Christ, for all who love and fear thee. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Advocate. Amen.

MARCH.

JULY.

NOVEMBER.

} PSALMS CXIII. & CXIV.

The servants of God are exhorted to praise Him at all times, and in all places, on account of his power and glory, his mercy in redeeming man, and making joyful the Christian Church in the increase of her members. What Chris-

tian can be unmindful of the condescending love of God, when he is told, that the very hairs of his head are all numbered? What poor man can fail to praise the Lord, when he reads these emphatic words,—“To the poor the Gospel is preached?” Such is God’s love to man—such his mercy to the fallen sons of Adam,—that, from the lowest and most abject condition, even from the pollutions of sin, and the dishonour of the grave, he raiseth them to righteousness and holiness, to glory and immortality.

The 114th Psalm celebrates the Exodus of Israel from Egypt; and, in the miracles wrought for God’s people of old, we see prefigured the greater wonders of mercy and love, wrought for us by Jesus Christ. Praise ye the Lord.

PSALM CXIII.

1. Praise the Lord, ye servants: O praise the Name of the Lord.

2. Blessed be the Name of the Lord from this time forth for evermore.

3. The Lord’s Name is praised from the rising up of the sun unto the going down of the same.¹

4. The Lord is high above all the earth, and his glory above the heavens.

5. Who is like unto the Lord our God, that hath his dwelling so high, and yet humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth?

⁽¹⁾ That is, from east to west.

6 & 7. He taketh up the simple out of the dust,⁸ and lifteth the poor out of the mire ; that he may set him with the princes, even with the princes of his people.

8. ³He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children,

PSALM CXIV.

1 & 2. When Israel came out of Egypt, and the house of Jacob from among the strange people, Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion.

3 & 4. The sea¹ saw that, and fled ; Jordan was driven back ; the mountains skipped like rams, and little hills like young sheep.

5 & 6. What aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest ; and thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back : ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams, and ye little hills, like young sheep ?

7 & 8. Tremble thou, earth, at the presence of the Lord ; at the presence of the God of Jacob ; who turned the hard rock into a standing water, and the flint stone into a springing well.

O Lord God, at whose presence the earth trembles, who workest salvation and deliver-

⁽⁸⁾ The dust of the grave, and the mire of sin.

⁽⁹⁾ An allusion is here made to the Gentile Church.

⁽¹⁾ In the passage of Israel through the Red Sea we may contemplate our

passage from a death of sin to a state of grace. By the retiring of the waters, and opening a path for the people of God, we are taught that, if we continue faithful, all obstructions in our way to heaven will be removed.

ance for thy holy Church in all ages, and didst deliver thy people from the bondage of Egypt with a mighty hand, deliver us, we most humbly beseech thee, from the bondage of sin, from the tyranny of the devil, from the empire and dominion of the flesh, that our souls and bodies being mortified, our flesh brought under subjection to the Spirit, our appetites made obedient unto reason, and our souls rendered wholly conformable to thy will, our hard and stony heart may be converted into a heart of flesh, and into a springing well, bringing forth the waters of repentance, and fruits growing up to life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

MARCH.	}	PSALM CXV.
JULY.		
NOVEMBER.		

The great duty inculcated in this psalm is trust in God, which we are called upon to place, not on the grounds of any merit or deserving of our own, but for his loving mercy and truth's sake. A beautiful contrast is formed between the God of Israel, and the heathen idols—between the God who heareth prayer, and the

idol who is blind, deaf, dumb, and senseless ; and while we reflect upon the stupidity of idolaters with contempt, let us humbly recollect, that we are the same by nature, and that it is God alone who maketh us to differ. Those who reject the Gospel to rely for salvation on their own merits, and those also who idolize worldly advantages, which cannot profit them in the day of judgment, are as fatally deceived as the worshippers of idols. And as death will terminate our opportunities of praising God on earth, let us now redeem the time, seeking to glorify him not only with our lips, but in our lives.

1. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name give the praise, for thy loving-mercy, and for thy truth's sake.

2 & 3. ¹Wherefore shall the heathen say, Where is now their God? As for our God, he is in heaven ; he hath done whatsoever pleased him.

4, 5, & 6. Their idols are silver and gold, even the works of men's hands : they have mouths, and speak not ; eyes have they, and see not ; they have ears, and hear not ; noses have they, and smell not.²

7 & 8. They have hands, and handle not ; feet have they, and walk not ; neither speak they

⁽¹⁾ Should the heathen say, " Where is now their God?" Israel shall reply, " He is in heaven."

⁽²⁾ Our blessed Lord said of the Jews, — " For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and

their eyes have they closed ; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

through their throat : they that make them are like unto them, and so are all such as put their trust in them.

9, 10, & 11. ³But thou, house of Israel, trust thou in the Lord, he is their succour and defence ; ye house of Aaron, put your trust in the Lord, he is their helper and defender ; ye that fear the Lord, put your trust in the Lord, he is their helper and defender.

12. The Lord hath been mindful of us, and he shall bless us, even he shall bless the house of Israel ; he shall bless the house of Aaron.

13. He shall bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great.

14 & 15. The Lord shall increase you more and more, you and your children ; ye are the blessed of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

16. All the whole heavens are the Lord's ; the earth hath he given to the children of men.

17 & 18. The dead praise not thee, O Lord ; neither all they that go down into silence ; but we will praise the Lord from this time forth for evermore. Praise the Lord.

O Lord God omnipotent, whose seat is in heaven, and who hast done whatsoever pleased thee in heaven and earth, give us thy grace, that, in all our troubles, we may make thee our succour and defence, and put our trust in thee

⁽³⁾ The people at large, and their ministers, are each of them specifically called on to trust solely in God as their helper and defender.

only ; that we, receiving thy mercies, and the satisfaction of all our hopes from thy plenteousness and loving-kindness, may give praise unto thy Name, never ascribing to ourselves any honour or success, but to thee alone from whom all good things do come. Preserve us from worshipping or loving any vain imaginations, and making any thing the ground of our confidence but thy loving mercy and truth ; so that, resting all our hopes upon the merits of that beloved Saviour, who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification, we may be received as thy faithful children through him, and may have our perfect consummation of bliss both in body and soul in thy eternal and everlasting kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

MARCH.

JULY.

NOVEMBER.

} PSALM CXVI. & CXVII.

To enter fully into the spirit of the 116th Psalm, we must suppose the case of a person, with a true penitent heart and lively faith, brought by sickness to the very gates of the grave, feeling all that trouble and heaviness

which a consciousness of sin produces, and then experiencing the refreshing comforts arising from trust in the mercy of God, and the atonement and merits of our Saviour. Impressed with a sense of the vain assurances of men, of the craft and folly prevalent in the world, the penitent exclaims, "All men are liars;" and when seeking how he shall express his gratitude to the Almighty, he says, "I will receive the cup of salvation, and will call upon the Name of the Lord." Let us not wait till sickness overtakes us, but with hearts ever sensible of our numerous failings, ever mindful of our need of a Saviour, whose robe of righteousness may cover the deformities which sin hath produced in us, let us be at all times ready joyfully to embrace the occasions which the Church affords us of offering to God the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and receiving the cup of salvation.

PSALM CXVI.

1 & 2. I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications; because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.

3 & 4. ¹The sorrows of death compassed me,

(1) The conscience of a sinner, when shall deliver me from the body of this awakened, leads him to exclaim with St death! Paul.—O wretched man that I am, who

and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the Name of the Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.

5 & 6. ²Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful: the Lord preserveth the simple; I was brought low, and he helped me.

7. Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.³

8 & 9. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling: I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

10 & 11. I believed, therefore have I spoken; I was greatly afflicted; I said in my haste, All men are liars.⁴

12 & 13. What shall I render unto the Lord, for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord.

14. I will pay my vows unto the Lord, now, in the presence of all his people.

15. Precious, in the sight of the Lord, is the death of his saints.⁵

16. O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.

17, 18, & 19. I will offer to thee the sacrifice of

(²) In the salvation of a sinner we contemplate God's grace, his righteousness, and his mercy.

(³) That peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost, which the penitent experienceth, as the effect and fruit of pardon, afford him some idea of the rest and felicity of heaven.

(⁴) See 2 Cor. iv. 13, 14.

(⁵) God willet not the death of a sinner, but that all should turn from their sin and be saved. The word "precious," therefore, signifieth "of importance;" but must be understood as of "sorrowful importance."

thanksgiving, and will call upon the Name of the Lord; I will pay my vows unto the Lord, now in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.⁶ Praise ye the Lord.

PSALM CXVII.

O praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise him, all ye people: for his merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever.⁷ Praise ye the Lord.

O Lord God of eternal mercies, gracious and righteous, give unto us hearts filled with love and praise to thy holy Name; for thou hearest our prayers, thou breakest asunder the bonds of our sins; thou deliverest our souls from trouble and heaviness, and snatchest us from the sorrows of death, and savest us from the pains of hell. O merciful God, let our souls rest in thee, and be satisfied with the pleasures of thy mercy, that we may receive the cup of blessing and salvation, and celebrate the feast of the holy sacrament in honour of thy Name, and in remembrance of thine infinite

(⁶) These vows should be of future upon to praise the Lord, for their amendment of life. admission into the covenant of grace. See

(⁷) The Gentile nations are here called Romans, xv. 9 to 11.

benefits which thou hast done unto us ; and at last may pay our great hallelujah to the Lord, in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of the heavenly Jerusalem, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

MARCH.
JULY.

}

PSALM CXVIII.

This is a triumphant processional song, sung at the front gate of the temple. A conqueror, with his train, appears before it, and demands admittance to return thanks for his deliverance and final success, in an expedition of great difficulty and danger. The whole is allegorical ; the Jewish temple was a type of heaven—the gate of the temple is, therefore, the gate of heaven ; the priests within represent the angelic host attending around the throne of God in heaven ; the conqueror is Messiah, and his train the redeemed : and the subject of the whole composition is the redemption of mankind. In the notes are marked the changes which take place in the different speakers.

1. ¹O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is gracious, because his mercy endureth for ever.

2. ²Let Israel now confess that he is gracious, and that his mercy endureth for ever.

3. ³Let the house of Aaron now confess that his mercy endureth for ever.

4. ⁴Yea, let them now that fear the Lord, confess that his mercy endureth for ever.

5, 6, & 7. ⁵I called upon the Lord in trouble, and the Lord heard me at large : the Lord is on my side, I will not fear what man doeth unto me : the Lord taketh my part with them that help me, therefore shall I see my desire upon mine enemies.

8 & 9. ⁶It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put any confidence in man : it is better to trust in the Lord, than to put any confidence in princes.

10 & 11. ⁷All nations compassed me round about, but, in the name of the Lord, will I destroy them : they kept me in on every side ; they kept me in, I say, on every side, but, in the name of the Lord, will I destroy them.

12. They came about me like bees, and are extinct,⁸ even as the fire among the thorns ; for, in the Name of the Lord, I will destroy them.

13 & 14. Thou hast thrust sore at me, that I might fall, but the Lord was my help : the Lord is my strength and my song, and is become my salvation.

(¹) First single voice.

(²) Second single voice.

(³) Third single voice.

(⁴) Chorus of the whole procession.

(⁵) The Conqueror, the Messiah.

(⁶) By the train of the Conqueror.

(⁷) The Conqueror. Instead of "will I destroy them," we may read, "have I destroyed them."

(⁸) And are *soon* extinct.

15 & 16. ⁹The voice of joy and health is in the dwellings of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass: the right hand of the Lord hath the pre-eminence: the right hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass.

17, 18, & 19. ¹⁰I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord: the Lord hath chastened and corrected me; but he hath not given me over unto death: open me the gates of righteousness, that I may go into them, and give thanks unto the Lord.

20. ¹¹This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shall enter into it.

21. ¹²I will thank thee, for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.

22, 23, & 24. ¹³The same stone which the builders refused, is become the head-stone in the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes: this is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice, and be glad in it.

25. ¹⁴Help me now, O Lord: O Lord, send us now prosperity.

26. ¹⁵Blessed be he that cometh in the Name of the Lord: we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord.

27. ¹⁶God is the Lord, who hath shewed us light; bind the sacrifice with cords, yea, even unto the horns of the altar.

28. ¹⁷Thou art my God, and I will thank thee; thou art my God, and I will praise thee.

(⁹) By the train of the Conqueror.

(¹⁰) The Conqueror.

(¹¹) Priests and Levites within the gate.

(¹²) The Conqueror entering the gates.

(¹³) Priests and Levites within the gate.

(¹⁴) The Conqueror within the gates.

(¹⁵) Chorus of Priests and Levites.

(¹⁶) By the Conqueror's train within the gates.

(¹⁷) The Conqueror.

29. ¹⁸O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is gracious, and his mercy endureth for ever.

O most gracious Lord, our strength, and our song, thou art become our salvation, and thy mercy endureth for ever ; be thou on our side, take part with them that help us ; let the voice of joy and health, of praise and thanksgiving, be in our dwellings ; and when thou chastenest us, and correctest us for our sins, give us not over unto death, but fix our faith and hopes upon the head-stone in the corner, even our Lord Jesus Christ, that in all the assaults made against us by our ghostly enemies, the right hand of the Lord may have the pre-eminence, and bring mighty things to pass, even victory and deliverance unto thy servants, that we, putting no confidence in any child of man, may trust in thee only, O Lord, till at last, when thou openest the everlasting gates of righteousness, we may enter in, and give thee thanks and praise, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

¹⁸ Grand Chorus of all within the gates.

APRIL. }
AUGUST. }
DECEMBER. } PSALM CXIX.

PORTIONS FIRST AND SECOND.

It is very remarkable, that in almost every one of the 176 verses of this Psalm, the Word of God, under different terms, is mentioned: God's law, testimonies, precepts, statutes, commandments, judgments, all refer to one and the same thing, the Word of God. Attend diligently to this psalm, all ye who either are taught to refrain from studying the Word of God,* or ye who are constantly exhorted to do so, and yet neglect so great a means of salvation. How can ye know that ye walk in the law of the Lord, if ye will not study it? how can ye be undefiled or perfect, if ye take for your rule of faith, or your rule of conduct, any thing short of the inspired Word of God? It is by constantly examining ourselves by that unerring standard, that we can alone be preserved from lapsing into sin; for such is the corruption and deceitfulness of our heart—such the imperfection of human nature—such the

* This is addressed more particularly to lay members of the Roman Catholic persuasion.

assaults of Satan,—that nothing short of treasuring up in our minds, the truths, the precepts, the threats, and the promises of the Gospel, can save us from the way that leadeth to destruction.

1. Blessed are those that are undefiled in the way, and walk in the law of the Lord.

2. ¹Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and seek him with their whole heart:

3. They also do no iniquity; they walk in his ways.

4. Thou hast charged that we shall diligently keep thy commandments:

5. ²O that my ways were made so direct, that I might keep thy statutes!

6. So shall I not be confounded while I have respect unto all thy commandments.

7. I will thank thee with an unfeigned heart, when I shall have learned the judgments of thy righteousness.

8. I will keep thy ceremonies:³ O forsake me not utterly.

9. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? even by ruling himself after thy word.

10. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not go wrong out of thy commandments.

11. Thy words have I hid within my heart, that I should not sin against thee.

⁽¹⁾ The divine revelations, whether of the old or new law, are called God's testimonies,—they are the witnesses of his will, and the pledges of his love.

own inability, sighs after the refreshing and strengthening influence of divine grace.

⁽²⁾ The faithful soul, conscious of its own inability, sighs after the refreshing and strengthening influence of divine grace.

⁽³⁾ "Ceremonies," or, as it is written in the Bible version, "statutes."

12. Blessed art thou, O Lord : O teach me thy statutes.

13. With my lips have I been telling of all the judgments of thy mouth.

14. I have had as great delight in the way of thy testimonies, as in all manner of riches.

15. I will talk of thy commandments, and have respect unto thy ways.

16. My delight shall be in thy statutes, and I will not forget thy word.

Almighty God, who shewest to them that be in error, the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness ; grant unto all them that are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may eschew those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

O Lord, who never failest to help and govern them, whom thou dost bring up in thy steadfast fear and love ; keep us, we beseech thee, under the protection of thy good providence, and make us to have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

APRIL.
AUGUST.
DECEMBER. } PSALM CXIX.

PORTIONS THIRD AND FOURTH.

Believers among the Israelites well knew that the ceremonial institutions of the law typified some deep and spiritual mysteries—that, in fact, under them were veiled the wonders of redeeming love. But although the Psalmist was doubtless more intimately acquainted with the sacred Scriptures than most men, yet it is worthy of remark how often, and in what varied ways, he prays to be taught the statutes of God. “Open mine eyes,” saith he, “that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.” He knew that divine teaching alone could make him rightly understand the Scriptures ; that enlivening grace was necessary to prevent his soul from cleaving to worldly objects ; and that it was only by divine illumination that he could apply the Scriptures to the occurrences of life, so as to derive from them support, comfort, and direction in the right path. It is quite certain that the veil of prejudice, pride, and carnal affections, must be removed from the heart of fallen man, or he

never will understand the nature and glory of divine truth.

17. O do well unto thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word.

18. Open thou mine eyes, that I may see the wondrous things of thy law.

19. I am a stranger upon earth : O hide not thy commandments from me.

20. My soul breaketh out for the very fervent desire that it hath alway unto thy judgments.

21. 'Thou hast rebuked the proud, that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments.

22. O turn from me shame and rebuke, for I have kept thy testimonies.

23. Princes also did sit and speak against me, but thy servant is occupied in thy statutes ;

24. For thy testimonies are my delight, and my counsellors.

25. My soul cleaveth to the dust : O quicken thou me according to thy word.

26. I have acknowledged my ways, and thou heardest me : O teach me thy statutes.

27. Make me to understand the way of thy commandments, and so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.

28. My soul melteth away for very heaviness : comfort thou me according unto thy word.

29. Take from me the way of lying,⁵ and cause thou me to make much of thy law.

⁽⁴⁾ Self-sufficiency and impenitence are implied in this verse. in the 29th : the one comprehends every thing in doctrine and practice that is right ;

⁽⁵⁾ The "way of truth," in the 30th verse, is opposed to the "way of lying," the other denotes every thing which is wrong.

30. I have chosen the way of truth ; and thy judgments have I laid before me.

31. I have stuck unto thy testimonies : O Lord confound me not.

32. I will run the way of thy commandments when thou hast set my heart at liberty.

O Lord God, our Father, and our Sovereign Ruler, we are strangers upon the earth, far removed from our country : we walk on still in darkness, and in the shadow of death. Let not this darkness seize upon our souls ; hide not thy commandments from us, but grant us the light of thy Holy Spirit, that our eyes being opened thereby, we may see the wondrous things of thy law, and admire thy glories, and adore thy might, and obey all thy righteous precepts. Dispose us to love thee, O God, above all things ; make our desires to serve thee more and more fervent ; and grant that we may make thy statutes our chief delight, and counsellors, that walking therein, shame and rebuke may be turned from us, and we may ever rejoice with hope and confidence in thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

APRIL.
AUGUST.
DECEMBER.



PSALM CXIX.

PORTIONS FIFTH AND SIXTH.

We are taught in Scripture, that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom : it operates as a salutary restraint upon our evil desires. To obey the commandments of God, is the only acceptable sacrifice we can offer to him : obedience is the first duty of man to his Creator ; it cannot be too often inculcated as one of the fundamental principles of religion. And when obedience is attended with a firm persuasion, that all God's commandments are intended for our benefit—that they proceed from his love for us,—then the study of them becomes not only the most profitable, but the most delightful exercise of our faculties ; for what subject is so exalted as God's dealings with the children of men ? what riches, what honours, what pleasures, what length of days in this world, can be compared with those joys which are at God's right hand for evermore ?

33. Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end.

34. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law ; yea, I shall keep it with my whole heart.

35. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments, for therein is my desire.

36. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.

37. O turn away mine eyes, lest they behold vanity;⁶ and quicken thou me in thy way.

38. O stablish thy word in thy servant, that I may fear thee.

39. Take away the rebuke that I am afraid of, for thy judgments are good.

40. Behold my delight is in thy commandments : O quicken me in thy righteousness.⁷

41. Let thy loving mercy come also unto me, O Lord, even thy salvation ; according unto thy word.

42. So shall I make answer unto my blasphemers, for my trust is in thy word.

43. O take not the word of thy truth utterly out of my mouth, for my hope is in thy judgments.

44. So shall I always keep thy law ; yea, for ever and ever.

45. And I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy commandments.⁸

46. I will speak of thy testimonies also, even before kings, and will not be ashamed ;

47. And my delight shall be in thy commandments, which I have loved.

48. My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments which I have loved ; and my study shall be in thy statutes.

⁽⁶⁾ Solomon summed up the worth of all earthly things, and declared them "vanity."
⁽⁷⁾ Clear and full evangelical views are necessary to the enlivening exercise of our Christian obligations.

⁽⁸⁾ See St John's Gospel, viii. 31 to 36.

and also Romans, viii.

O Lord God, who art of infinite purity, and hast, through thy great love to man, given us thy law, that we walking therein may imitate the perfection of thy holiness, and finally, through the merits of Christ, may be admitted into thy heavenly presence ; make us to go all our days in the paths of thy commandments. Take from us all evil and inordinate desires ; let not our hearts be inclined to covetousness, nor our eyes wander after vain or wicked desires. Give us confidence and boldness in our Christian profession, that we may never be ashamed to confess thee before men, and to acknowledge that we make thy law the rule of our conduct ; but grant us the sustaining influence of thy Holy Spirit, that we may persevere unto the end in keeping thy commandments, in loving, and in studying them ; and this we beg for Jesus Christ, his sake. Amen.

APRIL.
AUGUST.
DECEMBER. } PSALM CXIX.

PORTIONS SEVENTH AND EIGHTH.

Composure of mind under the severest afflictions, and tranquillity of spirit under every trial, are the lot of him who resorts for comfort to God's word, and puts his trust therein ; and for this reason, because in the Scriptures we read the course of similar events, and the final result of them : hence our faith is quickened and strengthened, and hope for the future sustains us in our present state. Though infidels may scoff at, and worldly-minded men ridicule these truths, yet the believer stands fast, and instead of anger towards the gainsayer, is filled with compassion and sorrow for the vengeance which he is bringing on himself. When the Psalmist says, "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage," he perhaps alludes to his captivity in Babylon : but spiritually we may consider the soul which came from God, and longs to return to him, as in a state of bondage whilst in the body ; and to such a soul the disposition to meditate on, and the power to keep, God's law, is given from above. When sleep forsakes us in the

night, let us call our ways to remembrance, and let no provocation from others, how grievous soever, tempt us to act uncharitably towards them, or to forget the law of our God.

49. Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.

50. The same is my comfort in my trouble, for thy word hath quickened me.

51. The proud have had me exceedingly in derision, yet have I not shrunk from thy law.

52. For I remembered thine everlasting judgments, O Lord, and received comfort.

53. Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake thy law.

54. Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.

55. I have thought upon thy name, O Lord, in the night season, and have kept thy law.

56. This I had,⁹ because I kept thy commandments.

57. Thou art my portion, O Lord; I have promised to keep thy law.

58. I made my humble petition in thy presence with my whole heart: O be merciful unto me according to thy word.

59. I called mine own ways to remembrance, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.

60. I made haste, and prolonged not the time to keep thy commandments.

(⁹) "This I had," as if it were written.—"This ability to keep thy law, was vouchsafed to my earnest desire to do so,"

61. The congregations of the ungodly have robbed me ; but I have not forgotten thy law.¹⁰

62. At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee, because of thy righteous judgments.

63. I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and keep thy commandments.

64. The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy ; O teach me thy statutes.

O gracious God, be thou our portion and the lot of our inheritance, and be merciful unto us, whensoever we make our humble petitions in thy presence. Grant that in all our troubles we may put our whole trust and confidence in thy mercy, and derive comfort and support from thy holy word. Give us repentant hearts, and thy Holy Spirit, that we may sorrow for our sins with a godly sorrow, that worketh amendment of life. Make us companions of all them that fear thee, and teach us to shun fellowship with all those who despise thy law, that we be not drawn into the contagion of vice, but may be preserved holy and unblameable, until the appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee, and the Holy Ghost, ever world without end. Amen.

⁽¹⁰⁾ See Phil. iii. 2, and Heb. x. 32 to 39.

APRIL.
AUGUST.
DECEMBER. } PSALM CXIX.

PORTIONS NINTH AND TENTH.

I would direct your attention more particularly to the 67th, 71st, and 75th verses. To very little purpose shall we have studied the Scriptures, if we have not learned that affliction and distress are designed for our benefit : to very little purpose shall we have lived, if, when such visitations have befallen us, they have not served to bring us nearer and nearer unto God — to wean us from this transitory world — to remind us of our dependence upon our heavenly Father. But hearken unto the word of God itself ; first, as declared in the Old Testament, by the prophet Amos, iv. 9 to 12,—“ I have smitten you with blasting and mildew ; when your gardens, and your vineyards, and your fig-trees, and your olive-trees increased, the palmer-worm devoured them ; yet have ye not returned to me, saith the Lord. I have sent among you the pestilence, after the manner of Egypt : your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your horses ; and I have made the stink of your camps to come

up into your nostrils ; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a fire-brand plucked out of the burning ; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel ; and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel."

Next, hear St Peter in the New Testament, (1 Peter, i. 3 — 7) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time : wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations ; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." And, lastly, in Revelation, iii. 19, we read, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten ; be zealous therefore, and repent."

65. O Lord, thou hast dealt graciously with thy servant, according unto thy word.

66. O learn me true understanding and knowledge ; for I have believed thy commandments.

67. Before I was troubled I went wrong ; but now have I kept thy word.

68. Thou art good and gracious ; O teach me thy statutes.

69. The proud have imagined a lie against me ; but I will keep thy commandments with my whole heart.¹¹

70. Their heart is as fat as brawn ; but my delight hath been in thy law.

71. It is good for me that I have been in trouble, that I may learn thy statutes.

72. The law of thy mouth is dearer unto me than thousands of gold and silver.

73. Thy hands have made me and fashioned me ; O give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.

74. They that fear thee will be glad when they see me ; because I have put my trust in thy word.

75. I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right ; and that thou of very faithfulness hast caused me to be troubled.

76. O let thy merciful kindness be my comfort ; according to thy word unto thy servant.

77. O let thy loving mercies come unto me, that I may live ; for thy law is my delight.

78. Let the proud be confounded, for they go

⁽¹¹⁾ The reproaches of the wicked are among the trials to which our faith is subjected.

wickedly about to destroy me ;¹² but I will be occupied in thy commandments.

79. Let such as fear thee, and have known thy testimonies, be turned unto me.

80. O let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed.

O most merciful God, and loving Father, who, out of thy great kindness towards the children of men, dost at times visit them with afflictions and distress, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness, and that thou mayest draw them nearer unto thyself ; grant that we may receive these thy fatherly corrections with patience and submission ; and that, through thy grace, we may be renewed in the inner man, mortifying all our corrupt inclinations, and daily proceeding in all virtuous and godly living ; till at length we come to thy heavenly kingdom, through the merits and mediation of thy dear Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(12) The tenor of other verses in the Psalmist was not an expression of resent-
Psalms assures us, that this prayer of the ful feeling.

APRIL.
AUGUST.
DECEMBER. }

PSALM CXIX.

PORTIONS ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH.

The pious soul looks to God for comfort in every distress, even though the body be wasted away with sorrow. The eternity of Jehovah, and the unchangeableness of his counsels, afford the ground-work whereon faith and expectation may rest. Had our lot been cast in days of religious persecution, we might have said, “When wilt thou be avenged of them that persecute me?” and we should have found comfort in the assurance given in the sixth chapter of Revelation, at the ninth verse, that “the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held,” were admitted to rest under the altar of God.

In the ninety-sixth verse of this Psalm, the author of it says, “I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad.” Of the imperfection and instability of all things in this world, whether of strength, beauty, learning, or honour, experience affords us daily proof. But where is the end or boun-

dary of the Word of God? how quickening and powerful is it! It shall stand for ever. Who can fathom its mysteries? who can comprehend the extent of its promises? who can measure the exceeding greatness of God's love to man? and, alas! who can take in the full extent of that love which we owe to God? The knowledge, however, of one thing leadeth on to that of another; and by continually studying the Word of God, the spiritual meaning thereof will more and more unfold itself, and the traveller towards the heavenly Canaan, as he approaches nearer to its boundary, will, like Moses of old, from the top of Pisgah, be permitted to view, with the eye of faith, the fruitful and peaceful land which lies beyond the stream of time.

81. My soul hath longed for thy salvation, and I have a good hope, because of thy word.

82. Mine eyes long sore for thy word, saying, O when wilt thou comfort me?

83. For I am become like a bottle in the smoke;¹³ yet do I not forget thy statutes.

84. How many are the days of thy servant? when wilt thou be avenged of them that persecute me?

85. The proud have digged pits for me, which are not after thy law.

⁽¹³⁾ The meaning is, "I am become like a leathern bottle, which has shrunk by the action of heat."

86. All thy commandments are true : they persecute me falsely ; O be thou my help.

87. They had almost made an end of me upon earth ; but I forsook not thy commandments.

88. O quicken me, after thy loving-kindness ; and so shall I keep the testimonies of thy mouth.

89. O Lord, thy Word endureth for ever in heaven.

90. Thy truth also remaineth from one generation to another ; thou hast laid the foundation of the earth, and it abideth.

91. They continue this day according to thine ordinance ; for all things serve thee.

92. If my delight had not been in thy law, I should have perished in my trouble.

93. I will never forget thy commandments ; for with them thou hast quickened me.

94. I am thine ; O save me, for I have sought thy commandments.

95. The ungodly laid wait for me, to destroy me ; but I will consider thy testimonies.

96. I see that all things come to an end ; but thy commandment is exceeding broad.

Almighty and most merciful God, who, of thy tender love, hast allotted to us farther time for repentance and preparation for death, we adore and magnify thy glorious Name, humbly beseeching thee to grant us the help of thy grace, that we may no longer waste our time in

ease and pleasure, in unprofitable pursuits, or in vain conversation, but may, by an assiduous study of thy Holy Word, by constancy and fervour of devotion, by moderation and temperance, by justice and charity, prepare ourselves for that awful account which thou wilt one day require from us. Make us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us, that we may form good resolutions of amendment, and by thy grace may be enabled to persevere in them. We confess that we have been unprofitable servants ; but we implore thy pardon and forgiveness, for the sake and through the merits of thy dear Son Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

APRIL.
AUGUST.
DECEMBER. } PSALM CXIX.

PORTIONS THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH.

Words cannot express the love which a pious mind entertaineth for the Scriptures. They are the Epistle of God to mankind, offering, through Jesus Christ, reconciliation, peace, and a future union with himself in glory ; declaring

the motives why we should love him, and love each other, with directions how to shew forth that love, which, as the Apostle saith, is the fulfilling of the law. Every Christian at his baptism doth promise and vow to keep God's commandments, and, at his confirmation, doth ratify that vow. This is as much as if he had said with David, "I am sworn, and am steadfastly purposed, to keep thy righteous judgments." It is true that the inclination of the heart to God is the work of God in us ; but man is nevertheless said to perform that work when he listens to the call and obeys the motions of Divine grace.

97. Lord, what love have I unto thy law ! all the day long is my study in it.

98. Thou, through thy commandments, hast made me wiser than mine enemies ; for they are ever with me.

99. I have more understanding than my teachers ; for thy testimonies are my study.

100. I am wiser than the aged, because I keep thy commandments.

101. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep thy word.¹⁴

102. I have not shrunk from thy judgments, for thou teachest me.

103. O how sweet are thy words unto my throat, yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Self-restraint is perpetually necessary to enable us to combat the evil inclinations of the natural heart.

104. Through thy commandments I get understanding ; therefore I hate all evil ways.

105. Thy word is a lantern unto my feet, and a light unto my paths.

106. I have sworn, and am steadfastly purposed to keep thy righteous judgments.

107. I am troubled above measure ; quicken me, O Lord, according to thy word.¹⁵

108. Let the free-will offerings of my mouth please thee, O Lord, and teach me thy judgments.

109. My soul is alway in my hand,¹⁶ yet do I not forget thy law.

110. The ungodly have laid a snare for me, but yet I swerved not from thy commandments.

111. Thy testimonies have I claimed as mine heritage for ever : and why ? they are the very joy of my heart.

112. I have applied my heart to fulfil thy statutes alway, even unto the end.

O Sun of Righteousness, who hast brought light into the world ; who, by thy Word and example, and the illumination of thy Holy Spirit, dost point out to us the way, the truth, and the life : O let thy Spirit lead us, thine example guide us, thy Word teach us, that so we may not love darkness more than light, but

⁽¹⁵⁾ See Heb. xii. 5—13.

and implies a continual sense of danger.

⁽¹⁶⁾ To have one's soul or life in one's hand, is a phrase often used in Scripture, 1 Samuel, xix. 5 — xxviii. 21 : Job, xiii. 14.

may be enabled to keep thy righteous judgments, and faithfully to perform our baptismal vow. Leave not our souls in our own hands, but keep them under thy protection and government, lest we swerve from thy commandments : and grant that, applying our heart alway to fulfil thy statutes, even unto the end, we may possess thy law as our portion and inheritance for ever. Hear us, O blessed Jesus, for thy Name and for thy mercy's sake. Amen.

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{

PSALM CXIX.

PORTIONS FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH.

If we desire to pursue steadily a course of honest industry and integrity, we must resolutely shun the society of idle and disorderly persons. Let no man place confidence in his own power of resisting evil. The propensities of the human heart have become degenerate through the fall of Adam, and the powers of Satan war against him. It is through God's Word alone that we can be established in a course of wisdom — through his support alone can we find safety. But we must fence our-

selves round in every way that we can. We must avoid evil company ; we must shut out unprofitable thoughts, and endeavour to provide subjects of useful meditation for those vacant moments which are spared from business, or refreshment, or sleep. This we should do principally from the inexhaustible treasures of God's holy Word, and partly by storing the mind with such knowledge as may enable us to turn our industry to better account.

113. I hate them that imagine evil things, but thy law do I love.

114. Thou art my defence and shield, and my trust is in thy word.

115. Away from me, ye wicked ! I will keep the commandments of my God.

116. O establish me according to thy word, that I may live ; and let me not be disappointed of my hope.

117. Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe ; yea, my delight shall be ever in thy statutes.

118. Thou hast trodden down all them that depart from thy statutes, for they imagine but deceit.

119. Thou puttest away all the ungodly of the earth like dross ; therefore I love thy testimonies.

120. My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments.

121. I deal with the thing that is lawful and right : O give me not over unto mine oppressors.

122. Make thou thy servant to delight in that which is good, that the proud do me no wrong.

123. Mine eyes are wasted away with looking for thy health, and for the word of thy righteousness.

124. O deal with thy servant according unto thy loving mercy, and teach me thy statutes.

125. I am thy servant : O grant me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies.

126. It is time for thee, Lord, to lay to thine hand ; for they have destroyed thy law.¹⁷

127. For I love thy commandments above gold and precious stone.

128. Therefore hold I strait all thy commandments, and all false ways I utterly abhor.

O God, our defence and shield, thou that treadest down all them that depart from thy law, and puttest away the ungodly of the earth like dross, let thy mercies hold us up, that we may be safe from sin and eternal condemnation. Make us to hate all evil things, all corrupt imaginations, that, establishing our trust in thee, and building our expectations upon thy mercy and promises through Christ Jesus, we may not be disappointed of our hope, but may live with thee eternally in thy glorious kingdom, where thou livest and reignest in the unity of the blessed Trinity, one God, world without end. Amen.

⁽¹⁷⁾ There is a certain measure of individuals have filled up, the destroying angel
quity, which, when communities or individuals comes forth, and executes his commission

APRIL.
AUGUST.
DECEMBER. } PSALM CXIX.

PORTIONS SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH.

The Scriptures are the appointed means of enlightening the mind with true and saving knowledge ; they teach us what we were, what we are, and what we shall be ; they shew us what God hath done for us, and what he expects from us ; they warn us of the adversaries we have to contend with, and teach us how to contend with them successfully ; they reveal to us the mercy and the justice of God—the joys of heaven, and the pains of hell. The righteousness of God is an everlasting righteousness. His justice, his goodness, his faithfulness, are the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever ; and what though spiritual truths are veiled under figurative descriptions, and under parables, yet those who will see may see, for God giveth light and understanding to the simple, and knowledge to those who, in an honest and true heart, seek to learn wisdom, and to get understanding.

129. Thy testimonies¹⁸ are wonderful, therefore doth my soul keep them.

130. ¹⁹When thy word goeth forth, it giveth light and understanding to the simple.

131. I opened my mouth, and drew in my breath ; for my delight was in thy commandments.

132. O look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy Name.

133. Order my steps in thy word, and so shall no wickedness have dominion over me.

134. O deliver me from the wrongful dealings of men, and so shall I keep thy commandments.

135. Shew the light of thy countenance upon thy servant, and teach me thy statutes.

136. Mine eyes gush out with water, because men keep not thy law.

137. Righteous art thou, O Lord ; and true is thy judgment.

138. The testimonies that thou hast commanded are exceeding righteous and true.

139. My zeal hath even consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten thy words.

140. Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it.²⁰

141. I am small, and of no reputation, yet do I not forget thy commandments.

142. Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.

143. Trouble and heaviness have taken hold upon me, yet is my delight in thy commandments.

⁽¹⁸⁾ See note on the second verse of this psalm as to the sense implied by the word "Testimonies."

⁽¹⁹⁾ See 2 Cor. iii. 15 to 18.

⁽²⁰⁾ He who loves the Word of God will naturally desire to be conformed to it.

144. The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: O grant me understanding, and I shall live.

O just and merciful God, shew the light of thy countenance upon us thy servants, and let this light give us understanding of thy law, that our hearts may be disposed to obedience, and that all our thoughts, words, and actions, may be rendered acceptable to thee. Give us awful thoughts of thy divine majesty, of thy justice and love of purity, that we presume not wilfully to run into temptation, lest wickedness get the dominion over us, and we become a prey to the great enemy of souls. O Lord, hear us, and let thy grace sustain us, for the sake, and through the merits, of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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 AUGUST. }
 DECEMBER. } PSALM CXIX.

PORTIONS NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH.

The Psalmist, under the great sufferings, privation, and persecution which he underwent

in common with the rest of God's chosen people during their captivity, looks for comfort and support, as David had done, to the word of God. He studied it with his whole heart early in the morning, and before the close of the night-watches. He studied it with a full determination to regulate his conduct by it ; with a full assurance of deriving from it animating and encouraging grace ; and with faith unfeigned in the promises of salvation therein held out. Would to God that our hearts were so inclined to his testimonies, that we could withdraw our thoughts more frequently than we do from worldly business ; that we could find delight in occupying ourselves with scriptural study ; in fortifying ourselves in youth, against the portion of trouble and heaviness which, in after life, we may be called on to endure, and in seeking after that joy and peace in believing, which can only result from a well founded faith in the mercies of God, through Christ Jesus.

145. I call with my whole heart : hear me, O Lord, I will keep thy statutes.

146. Yea, even unto thee do I call ; help me, and I shall keep thy testimonies.

147. Early in the morning do I cry unto thee ; for in thy word is my trust.

148. Mine eyes prevent the night-watches, that I might be occupied in thy words.

149. Hear my voice, O Lord, according unto thy loving-kindness ; quicken me according as thou art wont.

150. They draw nigh that of malice persecute me, and are far from thy law.

151. Be thou nigh at hand, O Lord, for all thy commandments are true.

152. As concerning thy testimonies, I have known long since, that thou hast grounded them for ever.

153. O consider mine adversity, and deliver me ; for I do not forget thy law.

154. Avenge thou my cause, and deliver me ; quicken me according to thy word.

155. Salvation is far from the ungodly, for they regard not thy statutes.

156. Great is thy mercy, O Lord : quicken me as thou art wont.

157. Many there be that trouble me and persecute me, yet do I not swerve from thy testimonies.

158. It grieveth me when I see the transgressors ; because they keep not thy law.

159. Consider, O Lord, how I love thy commandments : O quicken me according to thy loving-kindness.

160. Thy word is true from everlasting, and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for evermore.

Gracious God, who hast endowed us with immortal souls, grant that we may apply our

most serious thoughts to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Enlighten our understandings, that we may see the wondrous things of thy law: rectify our wills, that we may follow that which is good, and eschew that which is evil. Make us to consider, that the praise of men is but as a smoke, which vanisheth away; so that in all our thoughts, words, and actions, we may have respect to thy favour only, which is better than the life itself. Impress upon us, O God, the necessity of watchfulness against the assaults of our spiritual enemies; and do thou, O God, hold up our goings, that our footsteps slip not; that we may have grace and power to follow the good examples of such as have departed this life in thy true faith and fear, and may be made with them partakers of thine everlasting joy, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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} PSALM CXIX.

PORTIONS TWENTY-FIRST AND TWENTY-SECOND.

When David could have taken away the life of Saul, he said unto his men, "The Lord

forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's anointed." So also Joseph, when greatly tempted, answered and said, "How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" The power to resist temptation, to overcome when tried, which results from a knowledge and love of God's law, and which is granted only to those who study it with their whole heart, may well be compared to great spoils. This power exemplifies the work of God's grace within us, and leads to that peace—that great peace—which the Psalmist represents those to have who love God's law. In the breast of such persons, there is a calm amid the storms and tempests of the world; they are at peace with God, through the blood of reconciliation—at peace with themselves, through the answer of a good conscience—at peace with all men, through the spirit of charity. The two portions of this psalm, which we are now about to read, bring us to the close of it: may God grant, that this exhortation to the study of his holy word, may not fall lifeless on our hearts and understandings, but may produce in each of us an ardent thirst for the waters of eternal life!

161. Princes have persecuted me without a cause; but my heart standeth in awe of thy word.

162. I am as glad of thy word, as one that findeth great spoils.

163. As for lies, I hate and abhor them ; but thy law do I love.

164. Seven times a-day do I praise thee ; because of thy righteous judgments.

165. Great is the peace that they have who love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.

166. Lord, I have looked for thy saving health, and done after thy commandments.

167. My soul hath kept thy testimonies, and loved them exceedingly.

168. I have kept thy commandments and testimonies, for all my ways are before thee.

169. Let my complaint come before thee, O Lord ; give me understanding according to thy word.

170. Let my supplication come before thee ; deliver me according to thy word.

171. My lips shall speak of thy praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes.

172. Yea, my tongue shall sing of thy word ; for all thy commandments are righteous.

173. Let thine hand help me ; for I have chosen thy commandments.²¹

174. I have longed for thy saving health, O Lord ; and in thy law is my delight.²²

175. O let my soul live, and it shall praise thee ; and thy judgments shall help me.

176. I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost : O seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments.*

(21) The want of a *determined* choice, leads to a *hulking* profession.

(22) This is true religion, when the Lord of all occupies that place in the heart which he fills in the universe.

* Well will it be for us if this beautiful psalm, and each verse of it, should excite us to be followers of him who evidently knew so much of the heavenly enjoyments of religion. I know of no part of the

O Lord God, we have gone astray from thy commandments, like lost sheep: thou art our shepherd, and our merciful God. O seek thy servants; let thy hand lead us; let thy care and providence guide us into the way of thy statutes, that we being delivered, according to thine own word, from thy wrath, and from our own evil imaginations and corruptions, may at last be satisfied with thy saving health, and our lips may speak of thy praise, in the assembly of saints and angels, singing glorious anthems to all eternity, to the honour of thee, O Lord God Almighty, who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

Holy Scriptures, remarks a profound divine, (Edwards,) where the nature and evidences of true and sincere godliness are so fully and largely insisted on and delineated as in the 119th Psalm. The excellency of holiness is represented as the immediate object of a spiritual taste and delight. God's law,—that grand expression and emanation of the holiness of God's nature, and prescription of holiness to the creature, is all along set forth as the great object of the love, the complacency, and the rejoicing of the gracious nature which prizes God's commandments above gold—yea, the finest gold—and to which they are sweeter than honey, and the honeycomb.

The several graces of the Christian system delineated in this psalm, form an excellent touchstone of the sincerity of our profession, by marking its practical

influence in our daily walk and conversation,—a touchstone which appears especially needful in this day of profession,—not as warranting our confidence in any merits save in those of the Saviour, or as constituting in any measure our ground of acceptance with God, but as exciting us to “give diligence to make our calling and election sure,” and tending to quicken our sluggish steps in the path of self-denying obedience.

Religion will flourish or decay, as it is our duty or our delight. The mind incapable of continual exertion for duty, readily falls in with that in which it delights: thus, our duties become our privileges—Christ being their source and life; and every step of progress is progress in happiness. — *Extracts (with slight verbal alterations) from Bridge's Exposition of the 119th Psalm.*

APRIL.
AUGUST.
DECEMBER. } PSALMS CXX. & CXXI.

The Psalmist begs of God to defend him from the deceits and calumnies of the wicked, among whom he laments that it is his lot to live. How happy is that man whose help cometh from the Lord! Though the world frown upon him, he has within him a support and a light, which cheers his mind, and enables him to go through the duties of his station in life. He knows that his Defender neither slumbers nor sleeps, and that, after a life spent in his service on earth, he shall be made an inhabitant of the heavenly Jerusalem.

PSALM CXX.

1. When I was in trouble, I called upon the Lord, and he heard me.

2. Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue.

3. What reward shall be given or done unto thee, thou false tongue? Even mighty and sharp arrows, with hot burning coals.¹

⁽¹⁾ The latter part of the verse is, as it were, an answer to the question propounded in the first part of it.

4. Wo is me, that I am constrained to dwell with Mesech, and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar!²

5 & 6. My soul hath long dwelt among them that are enemies unto peace. I labour for peace; but when I speak unto them thereof, they make them ready to battle.

PSALM CXXI.

1 & 2. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh even from the Lord, who hath made heaven and earth.

3. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved; and he that keepeth thee will not sleep.

4. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

5 & 6. The Lord himself is thy keeper; the Lord is thy defence upon thy right hand; so that the sun shall not burn thee by day, neither the moon by night.

7. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; yea, it is even he that shall keep thy soul.

8. The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in, from this time forth for evermore.

O Lord God, the refuge of all that put their trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong,

⁽²⁾ Mesech was the son of Japhet; people whom he compares to the barbarous and idolatrous nations descended from Kedar the son of Ishmael. The Psalmist laments his long continuance among a Japhet and Ishmael.

nothing is holy, have mercy upon us, thine unworthy servants, who live in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation ; and keep us, we beseech thee, from the tyranny of ungodly men, that we be not ensnared by evil conversation, nor led astray from the paths of peace and godliness. Purify our hearts through the sanctifying influence of thy Holy Spirit, that, in all our thoughts, words, and actions, we may ever seek thy honour and glory. Let charity unfeigned reign through our mortal frame, elevating our minds to thee, the Author of all good, whose mercy extendeth over all thy works. Put away from us all anger, clamour, and evil speaking, and make us kindly affectioned one to another ; and as, by thy special grace preventing us, thou dost put into our minds good desires, grant that, by thy continual help, we may bring the same to good effect, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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}

PSALM CXXII.

This psalm expresses the joy with which the tribes of Israel assembled themselves to acknowledge the mercies of God. The Psalmist, full

of love for that city which contained the ark of the covenant, puts forth a prayer for its peace and prosperity,—a prayer which may have had reference partly to the welfare and happiness of his country generally, but principally to the welfare of the Church. Happy will it be for this nation when the period arrives that the unity of the Spirit of Christ will be the bond of peace, when all bitter contentions and animosities shall cease, and when the Church on earth shall become a lively portrait of that heavenly Jerusalem which is prepared for them that love one another as joint heirs with Christ, where, with one heart and one voice, they shall ascribe salvation, and honour, and glory, to God and the Lamb, for ever and ever.

1 & 2. I was glad when they said unto me, We will go into the house of the Lord ; our feet shall stand in thy gates, O Jerusalem.

3 & 4. Jerusalem is built as a city that is at unity in itself : for thither the tribes go up, even the tribes of the Lord, to testify unto Israel, to give thanks unto the Name of the Lord.

5. For there is the seat of judgment, even the seat of the house of David.

6. O pray for the peace of Jerusalem ; they shall prosper that love thee.

7. Peace be within thy walls, and plenteousness within thy palaces.

8. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will wish thee prosperity.

9. Yea, because of the house of the Lord our God,
I will seek to do thee good.*

O Lord, we beseech thee, let thy continual
pity cleanse and defend thy Church, and pre-
serve all its members from heresy and schism.

* Theodore Zuinger, when he lay on his death-bed, took his leave of the world in a paraphrase on the foregoing psalm. It may serve as a finished specimen of the noble and exalted use which a Christian may and ought to make of the Psalms.

I.

What joy, while thus I view the day,
That warns my thirsting soul away !
What transports fill my breast !
For, lo ! the great Redeemer's power
Unfolds the everlasting door,
And leads me to his rest !

II.

The festal morn, my God, is come,
That calls me to the hallow'd dome,
Thy presence to adore :
My feet the summons shall attend,
With willing steps thy courts ascend,
And tread th' etherial floor.

III.

Even now to my expecting eyes
The heaven-built towers of Salem rise ;
Even now, with glad survey,
I view her mansions that contain
Th' angelic forms—an awful train !—
And shine with cloudless day.

IV.

Hither, from earth's remotest end,
Lo ! the redeem'd of God ascend—
Their tribute hither bring !
Here, crown'd with everlasting joy,
In hymns of praise their tongues employ,
And hail th' immortal King.

V.

Great Salem's King, who bids each stato
On her decrees dependent wait ;
In her, ere time begun,
High on eternal base uprear'd,
His hands the regal seat prepared,
For Jesse's favour'd Son.

VI.

Mother of cities ! o'er thy head,
See Peace, with healing wings outspread,
Delighted, fix her stay.
How bless'd who calls himself thy friend !
Success his labours shall attend,
And safely guard his way.

VII.

Thy walls, remote from hostile fear,
Nor the loud voice of tumult hear,
Nor war's wild wastes deplore.
There smiling Plenty takes her stand,
And in thy courts, with lavish band,
Has pour'd forth all her store.

VIII.

Let me, bless'd sent, my name behold
Among thy citizens enroll'd !
In thee for ever dwell !
Let Charity my steps attend,
My sole companion and my friend,
And, Faith and Hope, farewell !

Suffer us not, O God, to be tossed about with various winds of doctrine, but grant that, trusting to the Holy Scriptures as the certain rule of faith, we may, under the blessed influence of thy Holy Spirit, so read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace, and even hold fast the hope of eternal life, which thou hast given us through Jesus Christ. Take from us, O God, all hardness of heart, that we may receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save our souls. Teach us to do good unto all men, by spreading thy Gospel, that thy ways may be known upon earth, thy saving health unto all nations. Let thy love to us, O blessed Jesus, become the pattern of our love to our fellow-creatures, that we may think nothing too dear to part with, so that we may promote their eternal welfare. Thou hast redeemed us with an inestimable price ; thou hast given us the means of grace and the hope of glory. Make us, O God, duly thankful for all thy mercies, and grant that we may shew forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up cheerfully to thy service that which thou hast put under our charge, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days. And this we humbly beg, for the sake and through the merits of Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

APRIL. }
AUGUST. }
DECEMBER. } PSALMS CXXIII. CXXIV. & CXXV.

The first of these psalms contains a prayer for deliverance from that reproach and contempt which infidelity and sensuality are wont to pour upon the servants of God. Under such sufferings, nothing can support us but the influence of God's Holy Spirit.

The great lesson which the 124th psalm inculcates is, that for every deliverance, whether of a temporal or spiritual nature, we should ascribe praise and thanksgiving to God. We are to recollect that the Church of God has, in every age, been opposed by multitudes of powerful enemies, and that fierce persecutions and cruel massacres have stained the Christian annals. But our help standeth in the Name of the Lord ; and so long as our trust in God is accompanied by faith unfeigned in the Saviour's merits, by purity of heart, and by fervency of charity—so long, and no longer, may we confide in his merciful protection.

In reading the 125th psalm, let us call to mind the fate of Jerusalem, and remember, that, because of unbelief, that divine presence, which was her bulwark, was withdrawn ; and

that to us, as to the Jews of old, the promises are conditional—we stand by faith.

PSALM CXXIII.

1. Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.

2. Behold, even as the eyes of the servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, even so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until he have mercy upon us.

3. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us ; for we are utterly despised.

4. Our soul is filled with the scornful reproof of the wealthy, and with the despitefulness of the proud.¹

PSALM CXXIV.

1 & 2. If the Lord himself had not been on our side, now may Israel say ; if the Lord himself had not been on our side, when men rose up against us, they had swallowed us up quick, when they were so wrathfully displeased at us.

3, 4, & 5. Yea, the waters had drowned us, and the stream had gone over our soul ; the deep waters of the proud had gone even over our soul : but praised be the Lord, who hath not given us over for a prey unto their teeth.

6. Our soul is escaped, even as a bird out of the snare of the fowler : the snare is broken, and we are delivered.

⁽¹⁾ Despitefulness, or contempt.

7. Our help standeth in the Name of the Lord, who hath made heaven and earth.

PSALM CXXV.

1. They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Sion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.

2. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth, even for ever.

3. For the rod¹ of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.

4. Do good, O Lord, unto those that be good, and to them that are upright in their hearts.²

5. As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity ; but peace shall be upon Israel.

O Lord God, who dwellest in the highest heavens, and yet vouchsafest to behold thy creatures here upon earth, have mercy upon us, and in all our dangers and necessities, stretch forth the right hand of thy power to save and defend us. Thou art our Lord and Master ; we are thy servants. Our eyes wait

(1) "Rod" here means power.

(2) The good and upright in heart are they who stand steady in every change of circumstances — who complain not of

God's dispensations, but, believing every thing to be best which he ordains, adhere to him, with a will conformed to his, in adversity, no less than in prosperity.

upon thee, till thou have mercy upon us. Let us not be ashamed of our hope, nor unfaithful of our service, nor distrustful of thy providence ; but make us diligent labourers in our calling, good stewards of our talents, and faithful in all thy house ; that we, first serving thee on earth, may at last sit down with thee in thy kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

APRIL. }
 AUGUST. } PSALM CXXVI.
 DECEMBER. }

This psalm refers to the time when Cyrus, King of Persia, sent forth the decree permitting the captive Jews to return from Babylon to their own land. It had been foretold of Cyrus by the prophet Isaiah, two hundred years before his birth, that he should be stirred up by the Spirit of the Lord to send forth this decree. Well, therefore, did the Psalmist ascribe their release to the mercy of God. The fatigue of the journey, and the toils and perils that awaited them on their return, might have occasioned despondency in some ; but they were comforted and sustained by the

assurance of subsequent happiness. And we Christians may here behold an emblem of our present toil, and future reward laid up for those who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for honour, and glory, and immortality in the life which is to come.

1. When the Lord turned again the captivity of Sion, then were we like unto them that dream.¹

2. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with joy.

3. Then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them.

4. Yea, the Lord hath done great things for us already, whereof we rejoice.

5. Turn our captivity, O Lord, as the rivers in the south.²

6. They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy.

7. He that now goeth on his way weeping, and beareth forth good seed, shall doubtless come again with joy, and bring his sheaves with him.

O Lord God, who hast promised salvation to thy people, and hast done great things for us already, deliver us from the captivity and misery of sin ; fill our hearts with holy sorrow and contrition whenever we trespass against thee ; and teach us so to deny ourselves, to

(1) See Jeremiah, xxx. and xxxi.

(2) As rivers which are dried up in summer, but flow in torrents after rain.

mortify our affections, to crucify our lusts, and all the temptations of the flesh, that if it shall be thy pleasure that we now go on our way mourning and weeping, we may possess our souls in patience; that so, when thy great harvest shall come, and thy reapers, the angels, shall separate the wheat from the tares, we may come before thee with joy, and bring our sheaves with us, to be laid up in the heavenly garner, and thus may escape the everlasting burning of the worthless chaff, through the mercies of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

APRIL. }
 AUGUST. } PSALMS CXXVII. & CXXVIII.
 DECEMBER. }

The first of these psalms was probably composed shortly before the building of the Temple by Solomon. The latter psalm was sung at the marriage festival of the Israelites. The success of all our labours, the issue of all our proceedings, depends upon God's providence; and a reliance upon him giveth quietness and assurance to the person who might otherwise be overwhelmed by anxiety and worldly care. Those who are parents will feel that their

happiness mainly depends upon the duty and affection of their children. Let them then be careful to train them up in the way in which they should go, looking for a blessing to him who giveth wisdom and understanding to the simple, and saying to the objects of his affection, Blessed are all they that fear the Lord, and walk in his ways.

PSALM CXXVII.

1. Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it : except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

2. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows ; for so¹ he giveth his beloved sleep.

3. Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

4. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of the youth.

5. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them : they shall not be ashamed ; but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.²

PSALM CXXVIII.

1. Blessed are all they that fear the Lord, and walk in his ways.

2. For thou shalt eat the labours of thine hands : O well is thee, and happy shalt thou be.

(1) Instead of the word "so," we may read "surely." dren standing forth in defence of their parents, so also in the multitude of true

(2) "It is a glorious sight to see chil- believers consists the riches of the Church.

3 & 4. Thy wife shall be as the fruitful vine upon the walls of thine house ; thy children like the olive branches round about thy table.

5. Lo ! thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord.

6. The Lord from out of Sion shall so bless thee, that thou shalt see Jerusalem in prosperity all thy life long ;

7. Yea, that thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel.

O Lord our God, without whose blessing all our endeavours are nothing worth, and our possessions are unstable and unsatisfactory, let thy blessing be upon our labours and our substance, on our children and on our dwelling, that the good things of this life may be regarded as an heritage and gift from thy bounteous providence, and may be used under an awful sense of the great account we shall one day have to give. Grant, O Lord, that they may minister unto us, not condemnation, but mercy, and that, feeling the comforts of thy goodness to us here, we may be stirred up to greater desires after the blessings of eternity. Shower down upon those who are near and dear to us thy heavenly benediction ; endue them with thy Holy Spirit ; graft in their hearts the love of thy Name ; mortify in them all

corrupt and carnal affections ; and let all things appertaining to the Spirit live and grow in them, till they all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. And grant, O heavenly Father, that, this short life ended, we may all be made partakers of everlasting glory, for the sake and through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

APRIL.

AUGUST.

DECEMBER.

} PSALMS CXXIX. CXXX. & CXXXI.

In the former part of the 129th Psalm, the Church, under the name of Israel, declares herself to have been often assailed and persecuted by her enemies : and to have been as often preserved by Almighty power. Between Christ and the Church, a union subsists, like that between the head and the members of the same body : they are, therefore, called by the same name, Israel ; and what is said concerning the one, frequently admits of an application to the other.

The language of the 130th and 131st Psalms

needs no explanation ; the sentiments of them need but to be felt : humiliation, sorrow for sin, and faith in the pardoning mercies of God, through Jesus Christ,—these are the sentiments of genuine repentance, of change of heart, of turning unto God. To those who feel them with sincerity and truth, may be addressed the words of St John, —“ If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.”

PSALM CXXIX.

1 & 2. Many a time have they fought against me, from my youth up, may Israel now say ; yea, many a time have they vexed me, from my youth up ; but they have not prevailed against me.¹

3 & 4. The plowers plowed² upon my back, and made long furrows ; but the righteous Lord hath hewn the snares of the ungodly in pieces.

5 & 6. ³Let them be confounded and turned backward, as many as have evil will at Sion ; let them be even as the grass growing upon the housetops, which withereth afore it be plucked up ;

(¹) From the earliest ages of Christianity, the Church hath been subject to persecution.

(²) The word translated “plowed,” also applies to cutting or scourging.

(³) While the felicity of Zion’s children is rooted and grounded in Christ,

that of her enemies hath no foundation : while the Church subsisteth from generation to generation, the empires that have persecuted her have faded away, like worthless grass, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven.

7. Whereof the mower filleth not his hand, neither he that bindeth up the sheaves his bosom.

8. Neither do they which go by say, "The blessing of the Lord be upon you ; we bless you in the Name of the Lord."

PSALM CXXX.

1. Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord ; Lord, hear my voice.

2. O let thine ears consider well the voice of my complaint.

3. If thou, Lord, will be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it ?

4. For there is mercy with thee, therefore shalt thou be feared.

5. I look for the Lord ; my soul doth wait for him ; in his word is my trust.

6. My soul fleeth unto the Lord before the morning watch ; I say, before the morning watch.

7. O Israel, trust in the Lord ; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.

8. And he shall redeem Israel from all his sins.

PSALM CXXXI.

1. Lord, I am not high minded ; I have no proud looks.

2 & 3. I do not exercise myself in great matters which are too high for me : but I refrain my soul and keep it low, like as a child that is weaned from

his mother ; yea, my soul is even as a weaned child.

4. O Israel, trust in the Lord, from this time forth, for evermore.

O Lord God, unto whom vengeance belongeth, with whom also is mercy, and plenteous redemption, be not extreme, we beseech thee, to mark what is done amiss ; for it is impossible that man can abide the severity of thy wrath. Enter not then into judgment with thy servants, O Lord ; but pardon, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our past sins, and enable us to walk, for the future, more worthy of our Christian calling. Take from us all pride of heart, and awaken us from the lethargy of spiritual sloth, that we be not puffed up with false conceits, nor neglectful of those great duties thou hast enjoined us to perform ; but that, joining humility of spirit with zeal in thy service, we may shew forth our faith by our works ; and may, at the last day, receive that blessing which thou hast promised us, through thy well beloved Son ; to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

APRIL. }
AUGUST. }
DECEMBER. } PSALM CXXXII.

This is one of the proper Psalms appointed for Christmas day. It contains a petition, that God would be mindful of the zeal shewn by his servant David, in preparing a resting-place for the ark of the covenant ; and well it becomes the people of Christ to be zealous, not only in all matters which conduce to the worship of Almighty God, but also in the building up within themselves that spiritual edifice which resteth upon faith in Christ Jesus. Let us pray, that the ministers of our Church may be clothed with righteousness ; that they may, both by their life and doctrine, set forth God's true and lively word, and rightly and duly administer his holy sacraments. The promises of God to us are made conditional, so that our interest in them depends on our faith, our obedience, our charity, and newness of life ; and it behoves us to remember what St Paul saith to the Romans, — “ Behold the goodness and severity of God ; on them which fell severity, but towards thee goodness, if thou continue in that goodness ; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.”

1 & 2. Lord, remember David, and all his trouble ; how he swore unto the Lord, and vowed a vow unto the Almighty God of Jacob,—

3, 4, & 5. I will not come within the tabernacle of mine house, nor climb up into my bed ; I will not suffer mine eyes to sleep, nor mine eye-lids to slumber ; neither the temples of my head to take any rest, until I find out a place for the temple of the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.¹

6. Lo ! we heard of the same at Ephrata, and found it in the wood.

7. We will go into his tabernacle, and fall low on our knees before his footstool.

8 & 9. Arise, O Lord, into thy resting-place ; thou, and the ark of thy strength ; let thy priests be clothed with righteousness, and let thy saints sing with joyfulness.

10. For thy servant David's sake, turn not away the presence of thine Anointed.

11 & 12. The Lord hath made a faithful oath unto David, and he shall not shrink from it, Of the fruit of thy body shall I set upon thy seat.²

13. If thy children will keep my covenant, and my testimonies, that I shall learn them, their children also shall sit upon thy seat for evermore.

14. For the Lord hath chosen Sion to be an habitation for himself ; he hath longed for her.

⁽¹⁾ The believer should spare no pains, no time, no thought, to find out, and prepare in his heart, an habitation for the God of Jacob, seeing our Lord's gracious words,—“ If a man love me, my Father will love him ; and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.”

⁽²⁾ See Acts ii. 30. This promise hath a twofold sense—relating to Solomon in type and shadow, and to Christ in substance.

15. This shall be my rest for ever ; here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein.

16 & 17. I will bless her victuals with increase ; and will satisfy her poor with bread. I will deck her priests with health, and her saints shall rejoice and sing.

18. There shall I make the horn of David³ to flourish ; I have ordained a lantern for mine Anointed.

19. As for his enemies, I shall clothe them with shame ; but upon himself shall his crown flourish.

O Lord God, who dwellest not in temples made with hands, and yet hast been pleased of old to testify thy presence among thy chosen people by special manifestations of thyself, vouchsafe to hear our prayers, and accept our services, whensoever we make our supplications to thee ; cleanse our thoughts, and purify our affections, that we may offer unto thee the freewill offerings of a grateful soul — grateful for thy mercies towards us in this life, but more especially grateful for the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And since thy blessed Son was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil, and

(3) By "the horn of David," we are to understand Messiah — the Sun of righteousness.

make us the sons of God, and heirs of eternal life, grant, we beseech thee, that we may purify ourselves, even as he is pure ; and that having been made thy children by adoption and grace, we may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit ; and may be preserved, both in body and soul, until we come to thine everlasting kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

APRIL.	}	PSALMS CXXXIII & CXXXIV.
AUGUST.		
DECEMBER.		

Of the last of these two Psalms mention shall first be made. It seems to have been sung at the time of shutting up the gates of the Temple for the night. The three first verses were sung by those Levites who were about to leave the Temple ; and the concluding verse, by those whose duty it was to remain and keep watch. In regard to the 133d Psalm, in which the blessings of unity are described, it may be remarked, that the holy oil wherewith kings and priests were anointed, was the outward and visible sign of God's blessing, poured out upon them, which, in the case of

Aaron, was so abundant, that it is figuratively said to descend to the skirts of his clothing. God's blessing is also compared to the dew which, in a hot country, fertilizes a thirsty land. Unity of heart and mind, on the subject of religion, and of government, is, doubtless, one of God's choicest blessings ; but if we are not permitted to hope, that differences on those points will cease in this our day, let us at least hope and pray for that spirit of charity, which is the bond of peace among Christians of all sects. " God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." Beloved in Christ, this is a great mystery ; but this is the doctrine of the Bible : mysterious union of God with man, through love, and that love shewn, in that while we were yet sinners, God sent his only Son to be the propitiation for our sins. " Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." Oh ! come the day when there shall be no divisions among us, when strife and enmity shall be done away, " when Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim ;" when the tribes of the spiritual Israel shall be united in a bond of eternal charity, under the true David, in the Jerusalem which is above ; and saints and angels shall sing together this lovely Psalm,—“ Behold how good and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity.”

PSALM CXXXIII.

1. Behold how good and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity.

2. It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down unto the beard, even unto Aaron's beard, and went down to the skirts of his clothing.

3. Like as the dew of Hermon, which fell upon the hill of Zion.

4. For there the Lord promised his blessing, and life for evermore.

PSALM CXXXIV.

1. Behold now, praise the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord ;

2. Ye that by night stand in the house of the Lord, even in the courts of the house of our God.

3. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and praise the Lord.

4. The Lord that made heaven and earth give thee blessing out of Zion.

O Almighty God, who hast built thy Church upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, grant that all Christians may be

so joined together in unity of spirit, by their doctrine, that they may be made an holy temple, acceptable unto thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, who art the first and chiefest good, engage, we beseech thee, all the powers and faculties of our souls to love and delight in thee — to place our trust and confidence in thee — and to desire thy blessing upon all our thoughts, words, and actions. Make us to consider, that the praise of men is but as a smoke which vanisheth away ; and that thy favour only is better than life, and endureth for ever. Enlighten our understandings, that we may see the wondrous things of thy law ; and rectify our wills, that we may follow the plain rules of good — may eschew the ways of evil — and in all our actions may seek to approve ourselves unto thee ; that so using the period of our mortal existence, we may be gradually more and more prepared for those eternal joys, which thou hast set before us, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour ; to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

APRIL. }
AUGUST. }
DECEMBER. } PSALM CXXXV.

In this psalm the servants of the Lord are called upon to praise his holy Name for all the mercies which, in his infinite power and infinite goodness, he hath bestowed upon them. He who hath the power of the elements at his command—who raiseth up one man and putteth down another—he who hath chosen Jacob for himself, and Israel for his own possession,—even he, the Lord God Almighty, hath dealt very graciously with us his servants. He hath called us, through Jesus Christ, out of darkness and the shadow of death. He hath promised unto us his Holy Spirit to be with us, and to guide us, and to make us more than conquerors over our spiritual adversaries. If Israel of old was called upon to adore and to love the Lord their God, shall not we, who are his children by adoption and grace, fall low on our knees before his footstool, evermore praising him, and saying, Halleluiah ! salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God. Halleluiah ! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

1. O praise the Lord ; laud ye the Name of the Lord : praise it, O ye servants of the Lord.

2. Ye that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God.

3. O praise the Lord, for the Lord is gracious : O sing praises unto his Name, for it is lovely.

4. For why ? the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his own possession.

5. For I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all gods.

6. Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, and in the sea, and in all places.

7. He bringeth forth the clouds from the ends of the world, and sendeth forth lightnings with the rain, bringing the winds out of his treasures.

8. He smote the first-born of Egypt, both of man and beast.

9. He hath sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O thou land of Egypt ; upon Pharaoh and all his servants.

10, 11, & 12. He smote divers nations, and slew mighty kings ; Sehon, king of the Amorites, and Og, the king of Basan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan ; and gave their land to be an heritage, even an heritage unto Israel his people.

13. Thy Name, O Lord, endureth for ever ; so doth thy memorial, O Lord, from one generation to another.

14. For the Lord will avenge his people, and be gracious unto his servants.

15. 'As for the images of the heathen, they are but silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

16 & 17. They have mouths, and speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, and yet they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths.

18. They that make them are like unto them; and so are all they that put their trust in them.

19 & 20. Praise the Lord, ye house of Israel; praise the Lord, ye house of Aaron; praise the Lord, ye house of Levi; ye that fear the Lord, praise the Lord.

21. Praised be the Lord out of Sion, who dwelleth at Jerusalem.

O great and glorious Lord God, in whom we live, and move, and have our being, we are thy people, and the sheep of thy pasture: we therefore worship, and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our maker. We thank thee for thy preservation of us during the night past, and we implore thy blessing upon all our actions throughout the present day. Thy bountiful goodness hath provided for us all we need, and more than we deserve. Give unto us grateful hearts and contented minds; and grant that we may shew forth thy praise not only with our lips but in our lives. Let the

(1) The objects upon which deluded less vain than was the idolatry of the man too often fixes his affections are not heathens.

thoughts of our heart, and the words of our mouth be acceptable in thy sight. Let charity unfeigned reign through our mortal frame, elevating our minds to thee, the Author of all good, whose mercy extendeth over all thy works. Let us put away all anger, clamour, and evil-speaking, and be kindly affectioned one to another. Grant that we may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of thee, the only God, and Jesus Christ our Lord, whom truly to know is everlasting life, and truly to serve is everlasting peace. Let no mortal sin hinder us in running the race that is set before us ; no carnal desires, no worldly temptations withdraw us from the path of godliness, that, this short life ended, we may be numbered with those blessed spirits whose course is finished, who have kept the faith, and may receive at the last day a perfect consummation of bliss, both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting kingdom. Grant this, O merciful Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Saviour and Redeemer. Amen.

APRIL.
AUGUST.
DECEMBER. } PSALM CXXXVI.

This is a delightful hymn of praise and thanksgiving to Jehovah, God of gods, and Lord of lords, for the wonders of creation, of providence, and of grace—wonders which angels desire to look into, and yet upon which man, insensible man, for whose benefit they were wrought, will scarce bestow a thought. Consider, on one hand, Israel of old rescued from the bondage of Egypt, conducted safely through the Red Sea, and through the wilderness, into the promised land, their every want supplied, their temporal enemies subdued. Behold, on the other hand, the Christian, the true Israel of God, released from the bondage of sin, rescued from the dominion of Satan, his spiritual wants supplied through the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and victory given unto him over death ; nay, in all things, made more than conqueror through Christ. Well may we say, O give thanks unto the God of heaven, and unto the Lord of lords, for his mercy endureth for ever.

1. O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is gracious, and his mercy endureth for ever.

2, 3, & 4. O give thanks unto the God of all gods ; O thank the Lord of all lords, who only doeth great wonders : for his mercy endureth for ever.

5 & 6. Who, by his excellent wisdom, made the heavens ; who laid out the earth above the waters : for his mercy endureth for ever.

7, 8, & 9. Who hath made great lights ; the sun to rule the day ; the moon and the stars to govern the night : for his mercy endureth for ever.

10, 11, 12. Who smote Egypt, with their first-born, and brought out Israel from among them with a mighty hand and stretched-out arm : for his mercy endureth for ever.

13 & 14. Who divided the Red Sea in two parts, and made Israel to go through the midst of it : for his mercy endureth for ever.

15. But, as for Pharaoh and his host, he overthrew them in the Red Sea : for his mercy endureth for ever.

16. Who led his people through the wilderness : for his mercy endureth for ever.

17, 18, 19, & 20. Who smote great kings, yea, and slew mighty kings ; Sehon, king of the Amorites, and Og, the king of Basan : for his mercy endureth for ever.

21 & 22. And gave their land for an heritage, even an heritage unto Israel his servant : for his mercy endureth for ever.

23 & 24. Who remembered us when we were in trouble, and hath delivered us from our enemies : for his mercy endureth for ever.

25. Who giveth food to all flesh : for his mercy endureth for ever.

26 & 27. O give thanks unto the God of heaven ;
O give thanks unto the Lord of lords : for his mercy endureth for ever.

O God of heaven, and Lord of lords, who, by thy excellent wisdom, hast created all things, and only doest great wonders in heaven and earth, making all thy creatures to be evidences of thy power, and of thy loving mercy ; let thy mighty hand and stretched-out arm lead us through the midst of this world, and the multitude of our spiritual enemies, giving us food for the sustenance of our bodies, and spiritual support in all dangers and necessities. Let the Sun of righteousness, O God, shine forth in our hearts, to give us a lively consciousness of thy mercy, and to excite in us a fervour of devotion and true religion ; and grant that, being sustained by thy loving-kindness whilst passing through this vale of tears, we may go on our way, rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, instant in prayer, serving thee, O Lord, until at length we are brought to the land of promise, the land of everlasting rest, prepared for us through the merits and mercies of thy dear Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose most holy Name and words we sum up all our wants, saying, “ Our Father,” &c.

APRIL. }
AUGUST. }
DECEMBER. } PSALMS CXXXVII. & CXXXVIII.

The captive Jews, by the waters of Babylon, sat down and wept, while they recollected their former prosperity. They especially recollected with tears the desolate state of the Holy City and the Temple of God, their own destitution of sacred ordinances, and the apparently ruined state of the Church and people of Israel, for these calamities were brought on them by their national transgressions, to which they had individually contributed. Whilst worldly men grieve for the loss of their outward prosperity, the believer mourns over his banishment from the ordinances of God, and for the despised and desolate state of religion, especially when he hears the insults, and scoffs, and blasphemies of infidels. The Babylonians, (who were used by God as a scourge,) meaning to deride the confidence of the Jews in the power and goodness of Jehovah, insultingly required of their captives to sing them one of their sacred songs, but the poor captives would not thus profane those songs, nor thus administer to the insolence of their idolatrous masters. In the latter part

of the psalm, a prayer is offered up for the accomplishment of the prophecies, which had previously been announced by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, against Edom, who had been the implacable enemy of God's people, and also against Babylon. But whether we consider the words of the Psalmist in the light of a prayer, or merely as a declaration, the spirit is the same, namely, the glory of the true Church, and the destruction of her enemies.

In the 138th Psalm, the zeal which animates true believers also appears in a strong light. We are exhorted to remember that God's mercies fail not ; and when we recollect that we are the work of his hands, how can we think he will forsake us, unless we utterly forsake him.

PSALM CXXXVII.

1. By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down ;
yea, we wept when we remembered Zion.¹

2. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the
midst thereof.

3. For there they that carried us away captive,
required of us a song, and they that wasted us
required of us mirth, saying, "Sing us one of the
songs of Zion."

⁽¹⁾ Zion is in Scripture the standing type of the oppressor and persecutor of the people of heaven, as Babylon is the grand figure of God of the world, the seat of confusion, the

4. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land !

5. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.²

6. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth ; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

7. Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem, who said, Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof.

8 & 9. O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed, happy³ shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us ; happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

PSALM CXXXVIII.

1. I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, with my whole heart ; even before the gods⁴ will I sing praise unto thee.

2. I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy Name, because of thy loving-kindness and truth ; for thou hast magnified thy Name and thy Word above all things.

3. When I called upon thee, thou heardest me, and enduedst my soul with much strength.

4. ⁵All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O Lord, for they have heard the words of thy mouth.

(²) "Cunning," that is, skill on the harp.

(³) "Happy" means in this verse, "prosperous."

(⁴) "The gods" here means the great men of the earth.

(⁵) The call of the Gentiles to the Gospel is here foretold, and the redemption of the Church in Christ her head is spoken of as the subject of thanksgiving.

5. Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord, that great is the glory of the Lord.

6. For though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly; as for the proud, he beholdeth them afar off.

7. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, yet shalt thou refresh me: thou shalt stretch forth thy hand upon the furiousness of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.

8. The Lord shall make good his loving-kindness toward me; yea, thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever: despise not then the works of thine own hands.

O Lord God, thou hast placed us in this world as in a state of trial, as pilgrims and strangers far from our proper country, far from rest. Grant, we beseech thee, that our longings and desires may be so raised above the concerns of this world, that we may make it our chief joy and delight to sing thy praises, and to shew forth thy works with gladness. Thou knowest, Lord, that, by reason of the frailty of our nature, we cannot always stand upright. Do thou then, O Lord, in thy mercy endue our souls with much strength. Support and comfort us; and in all our dangers and necessities stretch forth thy right hand to save and deliver us. Make us, O God, to have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy Name, to

rejoice in all the opportunities of serving thee in thy holy Church, and of offering up to thee our unfeigned thanks for all the blessings and comforts we enjoy here below ; and more especially for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory which thou hast set before us in thy dear Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who, with thee and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. Amen.

APRIL.

AUGUST.

DECEMBER.

{ PSALM CXXXIX.

The Psalmist employs a beautiful variety of expressions to denote his faith in the universal presence and universal knowledge of God. It is lamentable, however, to reflect, that even true believers, through weakness of faith, are often very wavering in their obedience, and easily discouraged from it by the trivial circumstances of time, place, company, or solitude. We should therefore, by meditation and prayer, seek to have our minds suitably affected with the firm belief and habitual recollection, that the just, the holy, the almighty God, fully searches us out and knows us. We should

seriously consider, that none of the disguises which cloak our real character from the knowledge of our fellow-creatures, avail with him; that when we are alone or in company, in the market, in the place of worship, or in the closet, the eye of God is upon us. Unto him all hearts are open, all desires known, and from him no secrets are hid; and the Gospel of Christ assures us, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

1. O Lord, thou hast searched me out, and known me; thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising; thou understandest my thoughts long before.

2 & 3. Thou art about my path, and about my bed, and spiest out all my ways. For, lo! there is not a word in my tongue, but thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether.

4 & 5. Thou hast fashioned me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me; I cannot attain unto it.

6 & 7. Whither shall I go, then, from thy Spirit? or whither shall I go, then, from thy presence? If I climb up into heaven, thou art there; if I go down to hell, thou art there also:

8 & 9. If I take the wings of the morning,¹ and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

⁽¹⁾ Could I travel as fast as the rays of morning light.

10 & 11. If I say, Peradventure the darkness shall cover me, then shall my night be turned to day ; yea, the darkness is no darkness with thee, but the night is as clear as the day : the darkness and light to thee are both alike.

12. For my reins are thine ; thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

13. I will give thanks unto thee ; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made : marvellous are thy works ; and that my soul knoweth right well.

14. My bones are not hid from thee, though I be made secretly, and fashioned beneath in the earth.

15 & 16. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect ; and in thy book were all my members written ; which, day by day, were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.²

17 & 18. How dear are thy counsels unto me, O God ! Oh how great is the sum of them ! If I tell them, they are more in number than the sand : when I wake up, I am present with thee.

19 & 20. Wilt thou not slay the wicked, O God ? Depart from me, ye blood-thirsty men : for they speak unrighteously against thee, and thine enemies take thy Name in vain.

21 & 22. Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee ; and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee ? Yea, I hate them right sore, even as though they were mine enemies.

23. Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart ; prove me, and examine my thoughts.

(2) Whereas the human artificer must have the clearest light to accomplish a delicate piece of mechanism, the Divine Workmaster effecteth all the wondrous texture of man's frame within the dark and narrow confines of the womb.

24. Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

O King of Glory, Lord and Maker of the world, thou art a God knowing all things, and even all our thoughts : give unto us, we beseech thee, an awful sense of thy constant presence with us, and yet a comfortable assurance of thy divine protection ; and let the desire of pleasing thee, and the fear of offending thee, restrain us from all evil, and lead us to all good. Mortify in us, O God, all our corrupt and carnal affections, and let all things appertaining to the Spirit live and grow in us, that as we approach the close of our existence on earth, we may become more and more fitted for the joys of heaven, and ready and willing to resign our souls into thy hands, whensoever it shall seem meet to thee to call us hence. Have mercy upon us, O God, have mercy upon us ; according to the multitude of thy mercies,

do away our offences ; and for the sake of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, receive us as thy children, and make us partakers of everlasting glory ; and this we humbly beg through the merits and mediation of our blessed Saviour and Redeemer. Amen.

APRIL. }
AUGUST. }
DECEMBER. } PSALMS CXL & CXLI.

The 140th Psalm leads us to remark, that slander and calumny must always precede persecution, because malice itself cannot excite people to persecute any one who is esteemed as a good man : to effect this, he must be represented as a bad man. Thus David was pursued as a rebel ; Christ was crucified as a malefactor and blasphemer ; and the first Christians were tortured as the most abandoned criminals. The Psalmist predicts those just judgments which God will inflict upon the slanderers and persecutors of his servants ; that evil speakers and false accusers shall be tormented with the hot burning coals of eternal vengeance ; and that the day will come, when the humble followers of Jesus shall rest in peace, and abide for ever in the presence of God.

The earnest prayer put forth in the 141st Psalm, suggests to us, that whenever placed in circumstances of great difficulty or danger, we should apply unto God for support, that our hearts may be restrained from evil, and from following the counsels of wicked men. In the book of Proverbs, we find the wise man declaring of the wicked, that they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence ; but of the just he says, that their path is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

PSALM CXL.

1 & 2. Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man, and preserve me from the wicked man, who imagine mischief in their hearts, and stir up strife all the day long.

3. They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent ; adder's poison is under their lips.

4. Keep me, O Lord, from the hands of the ungodly ; preserve me from the wicked men, who are purposed to overthrow my goings.

5. The proud have laid a snare for me, and spread a net abroad with cords ; yea, and set traps in my way.

6. I said unto the Lord, Thou art my God ; hear the voice of my prayers, O Lord.

7. O Lord God, thou strength of my health, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.

8. Let not the ungodly have his desire, O Lord ;

let not his mischievous imagination prosper, lest they be too proud.

9. Let the mischief of their own lips fall upon the head of them that compass me about.

10. Let hot burning coals fall upon them ; let them be cast into the fire, and into the pit, that they never rise up again.

11. Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth ; evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him.

12. Sure I am that the Lord will avenge the poor, and maintain the cause of the helpless.

13. The righteous also shall give thanks unto thy Name, and the just shall continue in thy sight.

PSALM CXLI.

1. Lord, I call upon thee : haste thee unto me, and consider my voice when I cry unto thee.

2. Let my prayer be set forth in thy sight as the incense, and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice.

3. Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips.

4. O let not mine heart be inclined to any evil thing ; let me not be occupied in ungodly works with the men that work wickedness, lest I eat of such things as please them.

5 & 6. Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness ; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head : ¹ yea, I will pray yet against their wickedness.

⁽¹⁾ The blessed effects of reproof, when and when taken as it ought to be, are given by a faithful and righteous friend, here beautifully set forth.

7. Let their judges be overthrown in stony places, that they may hear my words, for they are sweet.

8. Our bones lie scattered before the pit, like as when one breaketh and heweth wood upon the earth.²

9. But mine eyes look unto thee, O Lord God ; in thee is my trust : O cast not out my soul.

10. Keep me from the snare that they have laid for me, and from the traps of the wicked doers.

11. Let the ungodly fall into their own nets together, and let me ever escape them.

O Lord God, the protector of all that trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy ; we humbly beseech thee, that, in all our dangers and necessities, thou wouldest stretch forth thy right hand to help and deliver us. Keep us, we pray thee, in a constant state of watchfulness and humility, that we incur not presumptuously the danger of communication with ungodly persons, lest we be ensnared by their counsels, corrupted by their example, or misled by any worldly prosperity which may apparently attend them. But do thou, O God, strengthen us with thy might in the inner man, that we may have

⁽²⁾ This probably refers to some incident which gave rise to the psalm ; but commentators are not agreed upon the subject.

grace and power to fulfil thy will ; and whensoever we stray from thy ways, do thou, in mercy, reprove us, and let thy loving correction lead us back to the path of duty, that so running the way of thy commandments here upon earth, we may at length attain that everlasting rest which thou hast promised us through the mediation, and for the sake of thy dear Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

APRIL.

AUGUST.

DECEMBER.

} PSALMS CXLII.* & CXLIII.

The Psalmist, beset by dangers, and at a time when his worldly prospects were apparently at their lowest ebb, betakes himself unto God for help ; unto him he poured forth his complaint, and from him he obtained victory over his enemies. This Scripture should comfort the feeble-hearted, and animate all true believers. Prayer is indeed the voice of faith ; and the sinner who believes in the redeeming mercies of Christ will naturally pour forth his

* Bishop Horsley has entitled the 142d Psalm "a prayer of the Messiah taken and deserted." The 4th verse alludes to the desertion of the apostles when our Lord was seized in the garden ;

and the concluding part of the psalm the Bishop considers will bear this construction :—"In me (that is, in Christ) shall the just be crowned when thou hast given me my reward.

supplication in full assurance that his prayer will be heard, that strength will be given him to vanquish his spiritual enemies, and that God will, through his loving Spirit, lead him forth into the land of righteousness. In all our temporal difficulties let it be our first care to examine how much of them results from ourselves, from hasty judgment, or from following bad counsels ; and then let us humble ourselves before God, and seek in prayer that strength from above, which may enable us to maintain a more virtuous course for the future. Should we at any time be the victims of unmerited persecution, let meek endurance be coupled with a firm persuasion that there remaineth a rest for the people of God.

PSALM CXLII.

1 & 2. I cried unto the Lord with my voice ; yea, even unto the Lord did I make my supplication : I poured out my complaints before him, and shewed him of my trouble.

3. When my spirit was in heaviness thou knewest my path : in the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me.

4 & 5. I looked also upon my right hand, and saw there was no man that would know me : I had no place to flee unto, and no man cared for my soul.

6, 7, & 8. I cried unto thee, O Lord, and said, Thou art my hope and my portion in the land of

the living ; consider my complaint, for I am brought very low ; O deliver me from my persecutors, for they are too strong for me.

9. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks unto thy Name ; which thing, if thou wilt grant me, then shall the righteous resort unto my company.

PSALM CXLIII.

1 & 2. Hear my prayer, O Lord, and consider my desire ; hearken unto me, for thy truth and righteousness' sake ; and enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.

3. For the enemy hath persecuted my soul ; he hath smitten my life down to the ground ; he hath laid me in the darkness as the men that have been long dead.

4. Therefore is my spirit vexed within me, and my heart within me is desolate.

5 & 6. Yet do I remember the time past ; I muse upon all thy works ; yea, I exercise myself in the works of thy hands : I stretch forth my hands unto thee ; my soul gaspeth unto thee as a thirsty land.

7. Hear me, O Lord, and that soon, for my spirit waxeth faint ; hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.

8. O let me hear thy loving-kindness betimes in the morning, for in thee is my trust ; shew thou me the way that I should walk in, for I lift up my soul unto thee.

9. Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies, for I flee unto thee to hide me.

10. Teach me to do the thing that pleaseth thee, for thou art my God; let thy loving Spirit lead me forth into the land of righteousness.

11. Quicken me, O Lord, for thy Name's sake; and for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble.

12. ¹And of thy goodness slay mine enemies, and destroy all them that vex my soul; for I am thy servant.

Almighty and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities; and in all our dangers and necessities, stretch forth thy right hand to help and defend us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God, whose blessed Son was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil, and make us the sons of God, and heirs of eternal life; grant us, we beseech thee, that having this hope, we may purify ourselves even as he is pure, that when he shall appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto him in his eternal and glorious kingdom, where, with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, he liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

⁽¹⁾ This verse is strictly prophetic, and should be rendered, "Thou wilt slay," "Thou wilt destroy."

APRIL.

AUGUST.

DECEMBER.



PSALM CXLIV.

The Prophet Jeremiah writes,—“ Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might ; let not the rich man glory in his riches ; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth ; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord,” Jer. ix. 23, 24. The Psalmist, after blessing God as his helper and defender, breaks out into a strain of reflection upon the weakness and instability of man, the justness of which, as no one can gainsay, so all must feel that it is to God alone they must look for succour both in temporal and in spiritual dangers. Twice in this psalm doth David pray for deliverance from the heathen ; and in like manner the Church, or mystical body of Christ, is instant in prayer for that great and glorious day when all principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion, shall be made subject to the Son, and God shall be all in all. Meanwhile, the blessings of temporal peace are most beautifully described towards

the close of the psalm ; and at its conclusion the Psalmist reflects on the great happiness of a people in such circumstances, and declares that that happiness must be an effect of God's special favour.

1. Blessed be the Lord my strength, who teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight ;

2. My hope and my fortress, my castle and deliverer, my defender in whom I trust, who subdueth my people that is under me.

3. ¹Lord, what is man, that thou hast such respect unto him ; or the son of man, that thou so regardest him ?

4. Man is like a thing of nought, his time passeth away like a shadow.

5 & 6. Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down ; touch the mountains, and they shall smoke ; cast forth thy lightning, and tear them ; shoot out thine arrows, and consume them.

7 & 8. Send down thine hand from above ; deliver me, and take me out of the great waters ;² from the hand of strange children, whose mouth talketh of vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of wickedness.

9. I will sing a new song unto thee, O God ; and sing praises unto thee upon a ten-stringed lute.

10. Thou hast given victory unto kings, and hast

⁽¹⁾ Compare this verse with the 4th verse of the 8th Psalm, which St Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, has applied to Christ.

⁽²⁾ "Great waters," or calamities,—

"Strange children," heathens—"Vanity," or idolatry—"Right hand of wickedness," this last phrase is founded on the Jewish custom of holding up the right hand when swearing an oath.

delivered David thy servant from the peril of the sword.

11. Save me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth talketh of vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of iniquity.

12. That our sons may grow up as the young plants, and that our daughters may be as the polished corners of the temple.

13. That our garners may be full and plenteous with all manner of store; that our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets.

14. That our oxen may be strong to labour; that there be no decay, no leading into captivity, and no complaining in our streets.

15. Happy are the people that are in such a case; yea, blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God.

O Lord, our strength, our hope, our deliverer, our defender, in whom we trust, send down thine hand from above, and deliver us from those spiritual enemies who, by reason of the frailty of our nature, and the natural corruption of our hearts, get the dominion over us. Without thy aid, O Lord, we are poor, and weak, and miserable, and our offences become a sore burden, too heavy for us to bear; but thy property is always to have mercy, and to thee alone we look for righteousness and salvation.

Let thy blessing, O God, descend upon our children. Grant that they may grow up in thy faith, and fear, and love, and be nurtured with the dew of thy heavenly grace, that they may be defended from the assaults of all spiritual enemies, and have power to resist the allurements of the world, and the impulses of carnal will and frailty ; that they may enjoy, in common with the rest of thy people, the blessings of peace on earth, and may finally be made partakers of thy heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

APRIL.

AUGUST.

DECEMBER.

}

PSALM CXLV.

Hitherto, in this divine book, we have been presented with chequered scenes of danger, and distress, of deliverances and mercy. The voice of complaint hath sometimes been succeeded by that of thanksgiving and praise ; at other times hath terminated in prayer. But now, as if the days of mourning in Sion were ended, we hear no more of Messiah as a man of sorrows, or of the Church as depressed and afflicted. Henceforth we seem not to be on

earth, but in heaven ; associated with celestial spirits around the throne, and singing, as in this psalm, the praises of our God and King ; extolling his greatness, his might, his glory, his justice, his mercy, the majesty of his kingdom, and all his adorable perfections and wondrous works.

1. I will magnify thee, O God, my King, and I will praise thy Name for ever and ever.

2. Every day will I give thanks unto thee, and praise thy Name for ever and ever.

3. Great is the Lord and marvellous, worthy to be praised ; there is no end of his greatness.

4. One generation shall praise thy works unto another, and declare thy power.

5. As for me, I will be talking of thy worship, thy glory, thy praise, and wondrous works.¹

6. So that men shall speak of the might of thy marvellous acts ; and I will also tell of thy greatness.

7. The memorial of thine abundant kindness shall be shewed, and men shall sing of thy righteousness.

8. The Lord is gracious and merciful, long-suffering, and of great goodness.

9. The Lord is loving unto every man, and his mercy is over all his works.

10. All thy works praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints give thanks unto thee.

⁽¹⁾ The works of God, which demand to be celebrated by the tongues of men, are here divided into three kinds : First, those which declare his glory and excite our admiration, such as the heavens and the starry firmament ; Secondly, the exertions of his power against his enemies, such as the destruction of the old world by water — of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire ; Thirdly, the provisions made by his abundant kindness for the temporal and spiritual wants of man.

11 & 12. They shew the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power ; that thy power, thy glory, and mightiness of thy kingdom might be known unto men.

13. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all ages.

14. The Lord upholdeth all such as fall, and lifteth up all those that are down.

15. The eyes of all wait upon thee, O Lord, and thou givest them their meat in due season.

16. Thou openest thine hand, and fillest all things living with plenteousness.

17. The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

18. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him ; yea, all such as call upon him faithfully.

19. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him : he also will hear their cry, and will help them.

20. The Lord preserveth all them that love him ; but scattereth abroad all the ungodly.

21. My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord ; and let all flesh give thanks unto his holy Name for ever and ever.

O God our King, thou art marvellous, worthy to be praised ; there is no end of thy greatness : give us enlarged and sanctified hearts and lips, that we may sing of thy righteousness, and declare thy worship, thy glory, thy praise, and wondrous works. All thy

works praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints give thanks unto thee. Make us, then, who are indeed the work of thy hands, to be holy and righteous in thy sight, that we may be the more enabled to bless and praise thee, our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Sanctifier. Uphold us, O Lord, that we fall not, and when our feet slip, do thou, O God, sustain us : give us, at all times, food convenient both for our souls and bodies ; that being filled with the plenteousness of thy mercies here, we may have all our desires fulfilled and satisfied hereafter, and give thanks unto thy holy Name for ever and ever. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

APRIL.	}	PSALMS CXLVI & CXLVII.
AUGUST.		
DECEMBER.		

These two Psalms, as also the three last, form one continued exhortation to praise the Lord : they were written after the return of the Jews from the captivity in Babylon, when the Lord had released his people, had built up

Jerusalem, and gathered together the outcasts of Israel. Now, the record of God's dispensations towards his chosen people, under the old covenant, is given unto us, who live under the new, for our admonition—to the end that we should not lust after evil things—that we should not tempt Christ by hypocrisy or infidelity—and that we should not murmur at God's dealings with us, seeing that he treats us as children; but that in all our trials, so far as they come from his hand, we should be thankfully submissive, knowing that whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. We are warned against self-confidence, and against spiritual pride; and taught to look up alone to the hill of Sion, from whence cometh our help. God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers, by the prophets, hath, in these last days, spoken unto us by his Son; and if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense, how shall we escape, if we neglect to conform our lives to the mild precepts of the Gospel? The Israelites endured affliction in Egypt, and in Babylon; and it may be our lot to endure affliction in a world wherein both sin and misery abound; but let us not cast off our confidence in God, through Jesus Christ. The Lord hath turned the captivity of Sion: the Lord,

who suffered Job to be afflicted, did afterwards turn his captivity also ; and shall he not save his own elect, who humbly look to him, and with true penitent hearts, and lively faith, steadfastly rest their hopes in him ? Yea, he will save them ; he will order all things for their good on earth ; and after death he will receive them into the arms of his everlasting mercy.

PSALM CXLVI.

1. Praise the Lord, O my soul ; while I live will I praise the Lord ; yea, as long as I have any being I will sing praises unto my God.

2 & 3. O put not your trust in princes, nor in any child of man, for there is no help in them ; for when the breath of man goeth forth, he shall turn again to his earth, and then all his thoughts perish.

4. Blessed is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help ; and whose hope is in the Lord his God ;

5. Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein is ; who keepeth his promise for ever ;

6. Who helpeth them to right that suffer wrong ; who feedeth the hungry.

7 & 8. The Lord looseth men out of prison ; the Lord giveth sight to the blind ; the Lord helpeth them that are fallen ; the Lord careth for the righteous.

9. The Lord careth for the strangers ; he defendeth

the fatherless and widow ; as for the way of the ungodly, he turneth it upside down.

10. The Lord thy God, O Sion, shall be King for evermore, and throughout all generations.

PSALM CXLVII.

1. O praise the Lord, for it is a good thing to sing praises unto our God ; yea, a joyful and pleasant thing it is to be thankful.

2 & 3. The Lord doth build up Jerusalem, and gather together the outcasts of Israel : he healeth those that are broken in heart, and giveth medicine to heal their sickness.

4 & 5. He telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names : great is our Lord, and great is his power ; yea, and his wisdom is infinite.

6. The Lord setteth up the meek, and bringeth the ungodly down to the ground.

7 & 8. O sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving ; sing praises upon the harp unto our God ; who covereth the heaven with clouds, and prepareth rain for the earth ; and maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains, and herb for the use of men ;

9. Who giveth fodder unto the cattle ; and feedeth the young ravens that call upon him.¹

10 & 11. He hath no pleasure in the strength of an horse ; neither delighteth he in any man's legs ; but the Lord's delight is in them that fear him, and put their trust in his mercy.

12, 13, & 14. Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem ; praise thy God, O Sion ; for he hath made fast the

⁽¹⁾ See Matthew, vi. 26.

bars of thy gates, and hath blessed thy children within thee: he maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the flour of wheat.²

15. He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth; and his word runneth very swiftly.

16, 17, & 18. He giveth snow like wool, and scattereth the hoar frost like ashes: he casteth forth his ice like morsels; who is able to abide his frost? he sendeth out his word, and melteth them; he bloweth with his wind, and the waters flow.³

19 & 20. He sheweth his word unto Jacob; his statutes and ordinances unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation; neither have the heathen knowledge of his laws.

O Lord God, who reignest King for evermore, give us grace, that we may make thee our help, and fix our hopes in thee, for thou only art able to give deliverance unto thy people. Be with us, O Lord, in all our dangers

(²) The Church, like Jerusalem of old, is exhorted to praise God, for all the blessings vouchsafed to her, for her preservation, and for the increase of her members.

(³) The wonders of nature represent to us the miracles of grace; and the change of the seasons produceth not greater alterations than those which take place in the Church when her God hideth from her, or restoreth to her, the light of his countenance. What the sun is to the world, that is Christ to the Church. When

the heart of man turns away from him—when faith fails—when the love of many is waxed cold—when the fertilizing streams of charity are frozen: on the other hand, when God sendeth out his word and melteth them—when he bloweth with his Spirit, and the waters flow—when faith revives, and shoots into vigour, and brings forth fruit—when the hearts of men are warmed, and their understandings illuminated,—what is all this, but spiritual winter, or spiritual spring?

and necessities, both ghostly and bodily, and stretch forth the right hand of thy majesty to help and defend us. Let thy continual pity cleanse and defend thy Church ; and because it cannot continue in safety without thy succour, preserve it evermore by thy goodness ; and grant that its ministers, in their several vocations, may diligently and faithfully set forth thy true and lively word, and rightly and duly administer thy holy sacraments. Grant, O God, that all they that do confess thy holy Name, may agree in the truth of thy holy word, and live in unity and godly love, shewing forth thy praise, not only with their lips, but in their lives. Make this family and household to abound more and more in love for thee, and in zeal for thy honour and glory ; that it may be, amongst many others, the humble means of keeping alive a spirit of piety in this kingdom and people, that thou mayest bless us, and preserve to us a knowledge of thy salvation. Hear us, O merciful Father, for thy dear Son's sake, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

APRIL.

AUGUST.

DECEMBER.

}

PSALM CXLVIII.

All the creatures in the invisible and visible world, are called upon by the Psalmist to unite in a grand chorus of praise and thanksgiving. From the heavens, and those unutterable heights, where hosts of immortal spirits, admitted to a sight of their King, enjoy unfading pleasures, the song is to begin; and when the strain is thus set by the celestial part of the choir, it is to be taken up and echoed back by the creatures of this lower world, animate and inanimate. The heavens declare the glory of God—the firmament sheweth his handywork; and after the whole creation hath been called upon to praise Jehovah, man, for whom the whole was made—man, the last and most perfect work of God—man, that hath been redeemed from the consequences of his own transgression, by the blood of the Son of God incarnate,—is exhorted to join and fill up the universal chorus of heaven and earth, as being connected with both worlds,—with that which now is, and with that which is to come. High and low, young and old, men and women, those who are in health and strength, and those whose mortal

career is drawing to an evidently approaching close ; all, all are exhorted to praise their great Creator—him first—him last—him midst—and without end.

1. O praise the Lord of heaven ; praise him in the height.

2. Praise him, all ye angels of his ; praise him, all his host.

3. Praise him, sun and moon ; praise him, all ye stars and light.

4. Praise him, all ye heavens, and ye waters that are above the heavens.

5 & 6. Let them praise the Name of the Lord ; for he spake the word, and they were made ; he commanded, and they were created ; he hath made them fast for ever and ever ; he hath given them a law which shall not be broken.

7 & 8. Praise the Lord upon earth, ye dragons, and all deeps : fire and hail ; snow and vapours ; wind and storm, fulfilling his word.

9 & 10. Mountains, and all hills ; fruitful trees, and all cedars ; beasts, and all cattle ; worms, and feathered fowls.

11. Kings of the earth, and all people ; princes, and all judges of the world.

12. Young men, and maidens ; old men, and children, praise the Name of the Lord, for his Name only is excellent, and his praise above heaven and earth.

13. He shall exalt the horn of his people ; all his saints shall praise him, even the children of Israel, even the people that serveth him.

(*Chorus.*)—Praise ye the Lord.

O Lord God, whose Name only is excellent, and thy praise above heaven and earth, we adore and bless thy power and thy mercy for creating us after thine own image. Thou spakest the word, and we were made; thou commandedst, and we were created: and as thou hast established thy creation with a law for ever, that all should minister to thy praises in their several stations, so give us grace, that the laws of sanctity, of faith and obedience, which thou hast given us, may never be broken by us, that we, serving thee, as becometh thy children, and not as creatures without understanding, may hereafter sing thy praises amongst the angels, and the innumerable host of saints, reigning in thy kingdom. Hear us, O merciful Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our gracious Redeemer, and our Advocate with thee for ever. Amen.

AUGUST. }
 DECEMBER. } PSALM CXLIX.

This is a psalm of joy and gratitude for Israel's victory over their heathen enemies, by which that people were taught, at no time of peril or of success, to trust in their own arm, or to exult in their own strength, but in him alone who is "mighty to save." In like manner, Christian people, who are now the Israel of God, are admonished under all circumstances of worldly peril, or of prosperity, to look up to him alone, who maketh us to triumph over all our adversaries ; and we are also taught, when the conquest is achieved, and safety secured, not to forget him who hath delivered us out of all our trouble, but to lift up our hands and voices in glad and thankful acknowledgment, and to praise our heavenly benefactor with the "best member that we have." But if this be incumbent upon us under earthly trial and temporal glory, what reward shall be given unto the Lord for all the spiritual benefits he hath conferred upon us,—for giving us the victory over our strong enemy, for "saving us from death, and from him who had the power

of death, even the devil ;” and not only this, but hath assured us of future and never-ending happiness in a heavenly world, where there shall be no more wicked one to afflict or tempt us, but where there shall be “pleasures at God’s right hand for evermore,” where “we shall be eternally one with Christ, and Christ with us.” Oh, let us ascribe power, and honour, and homage, for those transcendant mercies. Let the praises of God be in our mouth, and the “mind be in us which was in Christ Jesus our Lord ;” and let “the Word of God, which is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword,” be the spiritual weapon of our warfare against all our enemies ; so shall we be avenged of them in due time, if we faint not, and the honour that cometh from God shall be upon us, his saints, in this and in a future world.

1. O sing unto the Lord a new song ; let the congregation of saints praise him.

2. Let Israel rejoice in him that made him, and let the children of Sion be joyful in their King.¹

3. Let them praise his Name in the dance ; let them sing praises unto him with tabret and harp.

4. For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people ; he will beautify the meek with salvation.

⁽¹⁾ The Israel of God sing this holy and greater mercies, a spiritual salvation, song, “New,” in its *evangelical* sense,—as an eternal redemption, new men, celebrating new victories, new

5. Let the saints be joyful with glory ; let them rejoice in their beds.

6. Let the praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hands ;

7 & 8. To be avenged of the heathen, and to rebuke the people ; to bind their kings in chains, and their nobles with links of iron.

9. That they may be avenged of them, as it is written, Such honour have all his saints.²

(*Chorus.*)—Praise ye the Lord.

O Lord our King, in whose honour and salvation all thy saints rejoice, give unto thy Holy Gospel a free passage in all the world, that kings and nobles may be bound with the chains of obedience, and discipline, and subordination to thy holy laws ; and grant to us, thy servants, that thy laws may be so fixed in our hearts, and thy praises in our mouths, that we may be written among the righteous, and have our portion with the saints who rejoice in their beds of eternal rest, and are joyful in the glories of thy kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

⁽²⁾ To those acquainted with the genuine spirit of the Gospel, it will be evident that the scene of which we have here a prophetic exhibition, is one that cannot take place till after the resurrection, because

the followers of the Lamb have nothing to do with vengeance in this world, though they are to judge not only men but angels in the next.

APRIL.

AUGUST. }
DECEMBER. }

PSALM CL.

IN this short but beautiful psalm, all creatures are invoked to celebrate the praises of their Creator; to adore and worship him, first, on account of his own infinite perfections, his power and might, his majesty and holiness, and all his unspeakable and incomprehensible attributes; next, to glorify him for all his unnumbered mercies and loving-kindnesses to the beings he hath made, to whom he hath given life and breath, and all things, and from whom he hath “withheld no manner of thing that is good.” Great, indeed, and incalculable have been the bounties and blessings of God to the children of his love, from their birth even to their death. Every child of man is indebted to him for every thing, and all the return they can make, is to confess him to be “the God of the spirits of all flesh”—the bounteous giver of all good, “in whom they live and move, and have their being,”—to testify of him “in his

noble acts, and according to his excellent greatness." Poor, indeed, and feeble is the tongue of man, and quite unable to utter all his praise; yet, what they can, that let them do; "shew yourselves joyful unto the Lord, all ye lands, sing, rejoice, and give thanks." And if this return should be offered for temporal and earthly blessings alone, what shall we say for spiritual,—for reconciliation with an offended God, for pardon of sin, for justification, for sanctification, for the means of grace, and the hopes of glory? if our praises be inadequate and unworthy for temporal mercies, how can they avail for eternal? Yes, God, for Christ's sake, will accept them: weak and insufficient though they be in themselves, he hath declared, "Whoso offereth me thanks and praise, he honoureth me." Encouraged by this, let our hearts be filled with gratitude, and our mouths with praise; let the united homage and acclamations of the redeemed ascend to heaven: for Christ's Name, and for his sake, they will be welcomed at the throne of grace, and thus shall we be prepared for higher services, and a holier worship in a future world of glory; there we shall sing a new song before the throne of God; then we shall sing "Halleluiah! for the Lord hath triumphed gloriously" over sin and death, and all the power of the enemy; "Halleluiah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth," and shall reign for ever and ever; "Blessing, and

glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto God for ever and ever. Amen.

With this call to “every thing that hath breath to praise the Lord” concludes the holy book of Psalms,—a book full of invaluable treasure to the Christian in all the varieties and vicissitudes of a changeful life, supplying him with inexhaustible subjects of thought and meditation, affording him solace and sustenance in all his earthly trials and afflictions, and furnishing him with topics of praise and thanksgiving in his days of prosperity. But more than this: The book of Psalms constitutes a portion of that Holy Volume, all of which “was written by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;” therein temporal blessings shadow out spiritual,—an earthly king is a type of a spiritual one. Prophecy, too, throughout, is testifying to future times, and to Him who hath fulfilled every type and symbol of the Jewish law; and this is the testimony of Jesus concerning this divine composition, just as he was about to leave this world, and to ascend to his Father,—“These are the words,” said Christ, “which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and in the Psalms concerning me.”

May we receive this testimony of Jesus concerning this inspired book, and accept it, as it is indeed the word of God, blessing and praising him for this and every portion of his divine revelation in Holy Scripture, which is able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

(*Chorus.*)—Praise ye the Lord.

1. Praise God in the sanctuary ; praise him in the firmament of his power.

2. Praise him for his mighty acts ; praise him according to his excellent greatness.

3. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet ; praise him with the psaltery and harp.

4. Praise him with the timbrel and dance ; praise him with stringed instruments and organs.

5. Praise him upon the loud cymbals ; praise him upon the high-sounding cymbals.

6. Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord.

(*Chorus.*)—Praise ye the Lord.

O great and glorious Lord God, we fall low on our knees before thy footstool ; we thank thee for the light of thy Gospel, for the help of thy grace, and for the promise of pardon and forgiveness which thou hast made us through

thy Son Jesus Christ, on our sincere repentance and amendment. O give us grace to repent us truly of our former sins, and give us steadfastness of purpose to lead a new life conformable to thy blessed will. Give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity, and so elevate our minds above the perishing things of this world, that we may be prepared for that everlasting rest which shall be given to thy people, for the sake and through the merits of Christ Jesus our Lord; to whom, with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, three persons and one God, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

THE END.



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